THE ART OF ALEX TOTH

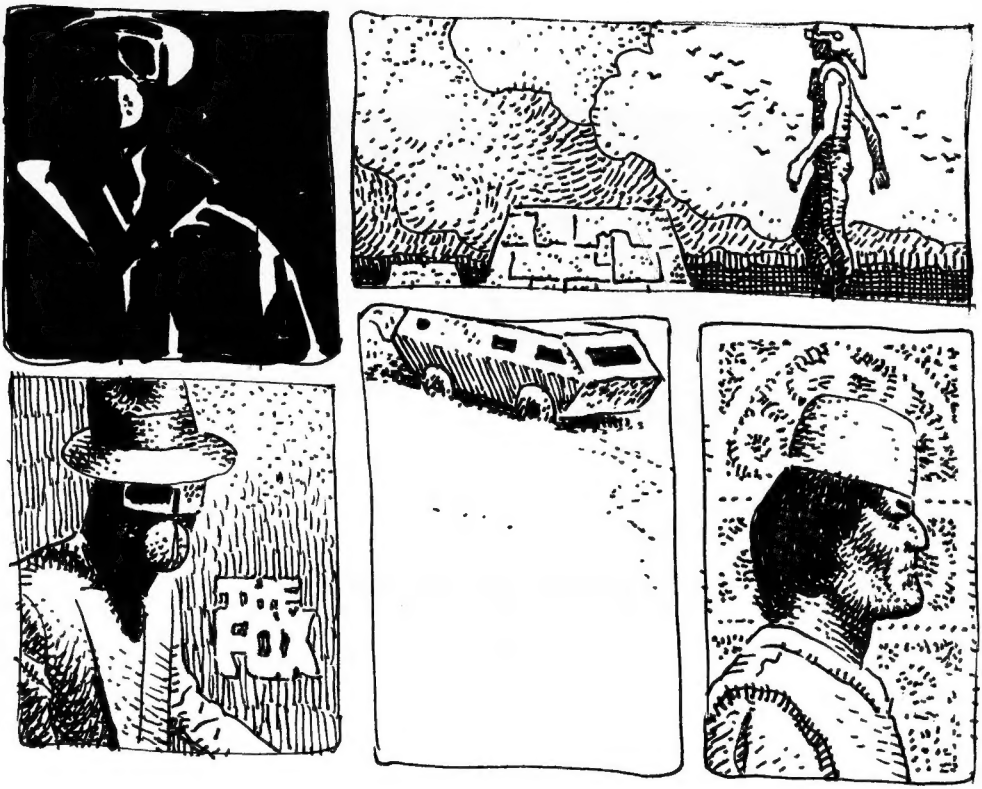
A DISPLAY OF ART WORK

BY

ALEX TOTH

SOME MATERIAL CONTAINED HEREIN IS AVAILABLE
AND MAY BE PURCHASED FROM THE ARTIST.

Alex Toth 2121 Broadview Terrace Hollywood, California 90068



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Published by Feature Associates Box 34158 San Francisco, California 94134

INTRODUCTION

The first time I saw artwork by Alex Toth was on the back of an 8X10 - inch U.S. Army bulletin in Tokyo in 1956. I promptly hid it from view and did likewise with each subsequent issue that crossed my desk.

The reproduction was awful and I couldn't make out the byline, but I knew I hated the artist! If he *dared* to visit my Air Force base I'd smile, shake hands and quietly push him down the concrete steps of our headquarters. That damned, anonymous soldier was guilty of being better than I was. Egad, he was better than almost everyone and poor reproduction wouldn't disquise it!

Until that moment I'd allowed myself to savor the prestige of producing a weekly gag panel for my base paper, and I daydreamed of having my own syndicated adventure strip. But one look at Toth's art and I sat down hard on my insignificance. I breathed easier when, at last, he did his farewell cartoon and headed back to his Hollywood home. I returned to daydreaming without my weekly confrontation with reality.

About 16 years later, via long distance telephone, I told Alex a nicer version of that story —— how I'd recognized his talent despite the ink blobs —— and he was disappointed that I did not still have those tear sheets. He'd been trying for years to get them. Actually, I had kept them for nearly 10 years (a streak of mascohism) but the footlocker in which I hid them never arrived on one of my many Air Force transfers.

Later, as a civilian air director for the Defense Department, I checked with a friend in the Army information program at the Pentagon only to discover that Alex's Army adventure strip is not among their archieves, probably because it appeared in a bulletin instead of the more conventional tabloid newspaper format.* Unless someone has uncovered my lost footlocker, those Toth strips are probably gone forever.

The reason for contacting Alex so many years later was to ask his help in compiling a book on illustrator Noel Sickles, a project I undertook for Woody Gelman's Nostalgia Press. Anyone who is a fan of Toth surely knows of his fondness for Sickles, a pioneer 1930s aviation strip who introduced a new chiaroscuro technique that was to be a great influence on Alex. As expected, Toth provided many bits of information and names of others who would help us complete the Sickles' *"SORCHY SMITH"* collection.

While we continued on that long project I persuaded Alex to illustrate some material for the Defense Department. Several of those pieces are reproduced in this index, including a never-before published story that was designed to be one of four features in a consumer information comic book aimed at a milirary audience. Connecting each of the stories was to be a drug-culture parody that was to end up taking a good-natured jab at the brass. The test market audience saw the samples published here and reactions were mixed: "Like it IS, man!"; "Bad taste!"; "Before its time!"; "Excellent!"; "Trash!"; "Groovy!" and finally, "Too expensive." The latter comment, from the top, ended the project. No one criticized the quality of the art, though one WAC griped about the braless girl and accused us of chauvinism. The story lay in a drawer until we managed to excerpt a few panels of the story for use in a 1976 Armed Forces newspaper consumer feature about diamonds; then in the same year one of the panels was picked to illustrate a point in a Defense manual on newspaper layout. I am delighted that it will be published in its entirety at last. Better news yet, Alex is now working on some new spot features that will definitely see print in military newspapers around the world (and probably remain forever in the swipe files of budding military cartoonists!).

What makes a Toth drawing so good? It is fine draftsmanship, use of unusual camera angles, and a strong sense of design that combine to present his work in an eye-startling package. Oh yes, and one other ingredient os lacking in many other well-known illustrators: he cares sincerely about each assignment he accepts (sometimes more than the art director who assigned the work) —— and therefore he often suffers in striving for perfection. I knew in 1956 and I am as positive now . . . Alex Toth is a cartoon genius.

— BILL CHADBOURNE
Art Director
American Forces Press Service

* *FOOTNOTE -*
"JON FURY", my copyrighted adventure strip was drawn for my base weekly paper THE TOKYO QUARTERMASTER DEPOT DIARY, for which I also acted as art editor, masthead/headline/spot/editorial artist/cartoonist. It was an 8-page multigraphed newspaper which received two service-wide awards (Dept. of Defense, 1955-56) for its entertainment features, namely ol' "Jon Fury",

— Alex Toth

AS IF TO TEST YOUR TOLERANCE and ENDURANCE to the EXTREME, and MY OWN, as WELL, I'VE BEEN ASKED TO WRITE MY OWN 'BIO' — SINCE NO ONE ELSE WOULD — and ITS WRITING MAY PROVE as CRAMPED and as INDIGESTIBLE as MY MINI-THESIS ABOUT "TV CARTOONS"!

CONFESSING that I'M as INTIMIDATED by THIS as YOU are; "LET'S AHEAD!" BORN: HALF-PAST MIDNIGHT, 25 JUNE, 1928, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, TO SÁNDOR (ALEXANDER) and MARY ELIZABETH TOTH, WHO COULD ILL AFFORD the EVENT, BUT MADE the BEST of IT with THEIR 'ONLY CHILD', and SO I REMAINED —!

WITH SO MUCH TIME to FILL (ALONE) I BEGAN to DOODLE at AGE 3, BUT COULDN'T SELL a THING UNTIL I WAS 15, and IN HIGH SCHOOL (S.I.A.)! MY PARENTS WERE BOTH ARTISTIC and MUSICAL, HUNGARIAN, and OUR FLAT WAS FILLED WITH MUSIC, SINGING, LISTENING, PLAYING, etc... MY MOTHER WOULD WASH the DINNER DISHES in the KITCHEN, SINGING a DUET with MY FATHER as HE ACCOMPANIED THEM on the CIMBALOM, and the NEIGHBORS KNOCKED ON STEAM PIPES OR the WALLS! BIGOTS!

MY FATHER PLAYED the VIOLIN and CIMBALOM, a HUNGARIAN INSTRUMENT... HE'D STUDIED VOICE and OPERA WAS HIS DREAM!

HE WROTE, DIRECTED and ACTED in HIS OWN PLAYS: DRAMAS and MUSICALS; FORMED HIS OWN GYPSY BAND, HAD HIS OWN RADIO PROGRAMS ON VARIOUS NEW YORK STATIONS IN the DEPRESSION '30's, BUT NONE of THESE ARTISTIC VENTURES PAID the BILLS, and HE WORKED HARD to DO SO as a HOUSE-PAINTER, LATER a CONTRACTOR! BUT HIS MUSICAL/THEATRICAL AMBITIONS, UNRESOLVED, FRUSTRATED HIM THROUGHOUT HIS SAD LIFE!

MY MOM WOULD 'DOODLE' PRETTY GIRL PROFILES (LIKE THIS MEMORY SKETCH) ... and NOTHING ELSE BUT! AND, WATCHING HER MUST HAVE LED ME to COPYING THEM, and LATER, TO DRAWING ON MY OWN — THO THE SUNDAY FUNNIES, COMIC BOOKS, and AFTERNOONS SPENT LISTENING to DAILY RADIO ADVENTURE SERIALS HELPED a LOT, I'M SURE, TO FIRE MY IMAGINATION, as I'D SIT SKETCHING CHARACTERS to MATCH the VOICES HEARD, as WELL as SCENES: CONTINUITY, IN THOSE PRE-WAR (and PRE-TV) YEARS of SWASHBUCKLING MOVIES, FLYING ACTION FILMS, WEEKLY MOVIE SERIALS, TOO!

HAUNTED PUBLIC LIBRARY, TO READ EVERY SORT of BOOK ALLOWED ME! BOOKS ON DRAWING, TOO, THO' I FANCIED 'AVIATION' as a WORTHY CAREER, DASHING, etc!

BUILT/FLEW MODEL AIRPLANES and LOVE THEM, STILL, as HOBBY!

POSTER CLASS TEACHER, JR. HIGH, TOOK TIME to URGE that I GO TO HIGH SCHOOL of INDUSTRIAL ART, and MAKE ART MY CRAFT!

ABSTRACT TO ME (at the TIME) I PONDERED IT, and THEN DID THAT, AGAINST FAMILY OPINION! BUT IT PROVED a RIGHT DECISION!

STUDIED ILLUSTRATION, MET a HERD of TYRO-CARTOONISTS WHO FIRED ME UP WITH COMIC STRIP TALK and STUDIED 'EM IN EARNEST! WITH PORTFOLIO, I SPENT AFTERNOONS PESTERING COMIC BOOK EDITORS, A.D.'S, and ARTIST HEROES: MESKIN, COLE, FINE, ROBBINS, etc... FOR CRITIQUES! THEY, and SHELLY MAYER, WERE KIND and HELPFUL GOT a PAGE to DO at FUNNIES, INC.

THEN, AT 15, I WAS HIRED by STEVE DOUGLAS of 'FAMOUS FUNNIES', and WORKED on 2 and 3 PAGERS for SOME TIME! GRADUATED S.I.A., WORKED FULL TIME at the BOARD!

SHELLY MAYER HIRED ME at D.C. IN 1947, WORKED on MANY 'HEROES', FUN — UNTIL 1952! THEN, for FEW OTHER PUBLISHERS, VIA U.S. MAILS, for I'D MOVED to CALIFORNIA in '50 — FOR KEEPS in '52!

DRAFTED into U.S. ARMY in 1954, TDY in TOKYO, JAPAN, WROTE/DREW MY OWN WEEKLY ADVENTURE PAGE, and RAN P.I.O. OFFICE, TOO, as a NEWS WRITER, etc., ENJOYED IT!

CAME HOME in '56, MOVED to L.A., WORKED on DELL COMICS 'TIL '60!

ANIMATION WORK, OFF and ON, and LOCAL (L.A.) and N.Y.C. COMIC JOBS HELPED — PLUS ADS, ILLOS, etc...

JOINED HANNA-BARBERA in '65, 'BOARDING, LAYOUT, CHARACTER DESIGN, etc... UNTIL '68, QUIT! IN COMICS, UNTIL '70, INTO FILM... OUT, and SO ON! IN '73, ASSIGNED to AUSTRALIA by H+B for WORK on "SUPER FRIENDS" SERIES!

WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR MY BULKY BIT in THIS BOOK! I HOPE IT'S BEEN WELL-RECEIVED by ALL WHO INVITED ME! I'M MARRIED, LIVE in HOLLYWOOD, and HAVE FOUR WONDERFUL CHILDREN...!

I'VE WORKED in MANY VARIED AREAS in the FIELD of PUBLISHING, FILM and TV, and NO LONGER CLAIM ANY ONE of THEM as a 'FAVORITE'! I WELCOME ANY ASSIGNMENT that HAS a RATIONAL and INTELLIGENT CONCEPT of EXCITING VISUAL POTENTIAL — and that PAYS WELL, of COURSE!

AND HAS a QUALITY of HONESTY in IT! I RESPOND BEST to HONESTY of SKILL, MOTIVE, TALENT, and PREPARATION!

I DETEST STUPIDITY, IGNORANCE and ARROGANT DISREGARD for CRAFT, in a 'PROFESSIONAL' — and I'VE MADE ENEMIES of SUCH PEOPLE THROUGH the LAST 33 YEARS! MUCH TO MY OWN DISADVANTAGE, I MIGHT ADD —!

BUT I AM WHAT I AM, and IT'S the ONLY WAY I KNOW of to LIVE a LIFE, in as HONEST a MANNER AS IS POSSIBLE! PLAY IT, and SAY IT, 'STRAIGHT'!

ALEX TOTH

Originally prepared for NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. Copyright 1975.

THIS ONE BEGAN LATE ONE NIGHT IN NOVEMBER, 1936 ... A TIME FOR NEW THINKING, CHANGE, EXPERIMENTATION AND PROGRESS...
IT SEEMED THE VANGUARD WAS DUE FOR SOME OF THE SAME... SO, I HAD DEVISED NEW GARB FOR HIM!
ONE THAT WOULD ALLOW QUICKER CHANGES IN AND OUT OF ANONYMITY, IN DEGREES — AND AS OCCASION WOULD PERMIT...
..FROM 'BASIC' MASK... OR 'INTERMEDIATE'... TO.. FULL COSTUME!...
HMMmm
MARK FORTÉ ALIAS...
THE VANGUARD
STORY and ART by ALEX TOTH
RUBY BISHOP, FIANCEE, AIDE-DE-CAMP... THANK YOU!
..I APPROVE!
©1977 ALEX TOTH
JUST THEN...
RING RING
HELLO? YES — SPEAKING!
MARK?! THANK GOD I FOUND YOU —
THIS IS EDEN.. EDEN GILES..OF LONDON! YES! MARK, OL' MAN, I'M IN A TERRIBLE FIX DOWN HERE IN MIAMI — AND YOU'RE M'LAST HOPE —
WHAT IS IT, EDEN? WHAT'S WRONG?!?
I-I CAN'T — NOW — NOT OVER THE PHONE! SORRY! I'LL TELL YOU IF AND WHEN YOU FLY DOWN! CAN YOU?!
SHHH..
EDEN GILES? MIAMI?
EDEN? MEET TOMORROW'S 4:00 PM PLANE! I'LL BE ON IT —
WE'LL BE ON IT —!
1

—MRS. GILES AIN'T GONNA BE SO PRETTY NO MORE—!
—HEY! LEGGO—
N-NO! NO! P-PLEASE DON'T HARM CELIA!!
BACK OFF, YOU—
—AN' QUIET DOWN!
UHNNN..
OHHHH..
Y'HIT 'IM TOO HARD, TOBY!
KRAK!!
SUDDENLY...
..THE WRATH OF THE VANGUARD ERUPTS!
POW
AKKK!
WHA-?!
THE VANGUARD!
WAP
BAM
BAM!
PAM
BAM!
NNNNNO! NO!
3

IT WAS TIME — FOR THE VANGUARD TO APPEAR AND TAKE ON THE SEARCH FOR CELIA GILES! ···
NOT A SOUND! NOT A CLUE!
MINUTE BY MINUTE, CABIN BY CABIN, THE ODDS GREW THAT MUCH SHORTER THAT THE NEXT TURN IN THE CORRIDOR WOULD BE MY..
JACKPOT!
A 'GUARD!
AND AN UNEXPECTED 'BONUS'···
OPEN UP, PATSY! IT'S 'DINING HOUR' FOR D' LADY FAIR AGIN! HAAAA—
GO WANNN! BEAT IT, YA SAP! I'LL GIVE IT TO HER —!
THE VANGUARD STRUCK!
HERE Y'ARE, TOOTS! LOOKS OKAY, HUH? WELL, SO DO YOU! TO ME! COME 'ERE!
SLAP
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MRS. GILES!
WHO-?! WHAT-?!!
NO! STOP!! -MMFF!
HERE'S 'ONE' FOR THE LADY, AND —
KAPOW!
'ONE' SEEMS TO BE ALL HE CAN TAKE!
I'M TAKING YOU OUT OF HERE, AND UPSTAIRS, TO SLIP YOU INTO THE CROWDS GOING BACK TO SHORE! READY?
YES —
IS EDEN ALL RIGHT? A-AND —
WHO ARE YOU?
HE'S FINE! I'M ACTING FOR HIM, THROUGH MARK FORTÉ, WHO'LL JOIN YOU LATER, TOPSIDE! NOW — WE MUST HURRY!
8

TECHNIQUE TIPS

My tools are scores of various felt tip pens, brushes, papers of mixed quality! Although I'd like to alert my curious and adventurous colleagues to the 'Pentel' brand india ink ball-point pen, now-improved and renamed to be the "Rolling-Writer," as per recent TV promos, ads, etc. . . .

I've found this pen a rare find – excellent tools with which I outline my figures, etc. . . . even letter my strips with it! Comes in many colors. I've just begun lettering in red (which photographs black, of course) –– which adds a look to the black and white page that I like – !

The "Pilot" "fine tip" felt-tip pen is also compentent for lettering, outlining, etc. . . . called the "Pilot" sign-pen – it, like the ballpoint "Pentel" is a waterproof ink pen! The now-discontinued "Magic Marker" '309' pen was also excellent, and a look alike to the "Pilot".

If one has patience, a thick and thin line can result from varying pressure, as with flexible penpoints of yore. Of course, within narrow range. These pens work best on less-expensive bristol papers, which absorb ink better, and produce truly black inklines, if pen is "fresh". I've had poor results on top quality bristols, because their surfaces are hard-finished, and are 'sized', (tho' pre-erasing these sheets will remove most of the sizing and produce better surface absorption.)

Despite this precaution, the inks will gray out as time passes.

Another keen product is the new, but hard to find, Venus Esterbrook "Paper/Blend" opaquing correction pen – glass ball point applicator, which rolls on a 1/8" line of a good white (retouch white) paint after giving the pen a good shake until one hears the interior steel ball clicking free. The tip must be cleaned of the dried paint collected there from prior applications by rubbing/rolling on scrap paper first and/or a good twist with a rough paper towel.

I use this 6" inch long white paint 'pen' for all retouch work on my black and white drawings. I can dot out fine errors, details, etc. or roll around into larger areas. Great for lettering errors.

One drawback, as with lots of retouch whites is its inability to cover ink lines/blacks of the thicker "Magic marker/Studio Markers". Their black inks will pick up and mix with the overlaid 'white' producing a gray mess! So beware of this limitation!

I've used this 'white' in color illustrations as well, where I use "Pelikan" colored inks, or thinned acrylic color, covering them very well! Highlights are picked out easily. The white paint cannot be disturbed by subsequent washes over it of any colored ink, acrylic. etc. It is truly permanent – except for its mixing over/under the thick "Marker" pen inks cited above. No problem avoiding this, though!

I've championed felt-tip pens, of fine and thick line types to my fellow cartoonists ever since these inks have been refined, made waterproof, and 'blacker' in dried state on paper – and have won over editors and production dept. staffers who were frustrated in their attempts to post-edit and correct my art.

But use of mixed types of pens produce happy discoveries and/or unhappy accidents. Such as: They will spread like ink on a blotter if used on a poor quality paper/board or in a humid atmosphere, and I've suffered many 'blotter' effect goofs! But experimentaiton is the name of the game until you find the pen/ink/paper combination that suits you and all the materials involved!

Caution: with thicker "Marker" pens, I've found that a 'fresh' pen is juicier – and thus prone to produce the dread 'blotter effect'. Beware.

Despite all these 'buts' and 'howevers', you'll enjoy the freedom and flair (no pun) that these new tools will bring to your line work!

I use 'em to lay in black 'masses', too; if paper/obsorption qualities/and particular pen's ink/drying quality/allows! I enjoy 'resistance' and 'surface tooth' and a firm tip, like a penpoint, in my work, matte/kid finish paper as opposed to plate finish. Thus, I've found felt-tips just fine. *For me!*

Happy experimenting!

NEW YORK CITY: 1990...
NOK NOK
BAM BAM
SMASH
GOOD GOD! Ooo
THIS IS LANDERS ..OVER ON WEST 64TH...
..I'M INVESTIGATING THAT SIGNAL 5B! GET A MEATWAGON OVER HERE! I'VE GOT THREE STIFFS OVERDOSED ON.. ARSENIC!
JESUS! LOOK AT THEM! THIS IS THE FOURTH PILL PARTY I'VE HIT THIS WEEK! STUPID KIDS! DON'T THEY HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO THAN TRIP OUT? ... WELL, THERE'S NOTHING MORE I CAN DO HERE! WAGON'S HERE BY NOW — MIGHT AS WELL MEET 'EM AND GET BACK TO THE STATION HOUSE! ...
WHAT'VE YOU GOT, JEFF?
THREE TERMINAL 'SENICS ON FLOOR 25! CLEAN IT UP—!
DOPEY KIDS NEVER LEARN, DO THEY?
NO... GUESS NOT!

All outlines and figure details were made with the 'Pentel' – and balloon lettering as well. Thicker 'sock' lettering was done with a felt-tip pen – the 'Sanford Sharpie'! Solid blacks were filled in with an Eberhard–Faber Markette 'Thinrite Marker'. Board used was No. 266 (double tone) stipple–tone on a stipple–surfaced 'Grafix' product, special order item, of fine quality. I enhance the tones of the board with a Staedtler Mars 1/8" black (grease pencil type) lead – which, due to the textured stipple surface blended beautifully and did not block up in the printing process.

SOON, AT PRECINCT HEADQUARTERS...
HE'S RIGHT! FIRST IT WAS BOOZE, THEN POT, LSD, AND HEROIN... NOW THIS STUFF! IS LIFE SO GODAWFUL FOR 'EM THAT THEY'LL TAKE IT..TO ESCAPE? OR IS IT THAT THEY JUST CAN'T FACE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WORKING TO IMPROVE THEIR WORLD?
BZZZZT KLIK!
HEY, JEFF!
HOW'S MY EX-PARTNER DOIN'?
HI, ROG'.. OKAY, I GUESS!
I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE LATELY! CONSCIENCE?
JUST TIRED OF CLEANING 'SENICS' CORPSES OFF THE STREETS, IS ALL...!
AUSTIN PRIVATE
WHAT? ARE YOU NUTS? NO REPORTS TO WRITE.. NOBODY TO BUST?! GO EASY, GUY.. YOU TAKE THINGS TOO SERIOUSLY! HAHAHA...
WELL — LANDERS! YOU'RE LOOKING RATHER.. DOUR..!
DOUR, HELL! LISTEN, AUSTIN..
WHEN DO I STOP HAULING 'SENIC GARBAGE, AND START DOING MY JOB.. BUSTING THESE DAMNED PUSHERS!?!!
WE KNOW WHO'S SUPPLYING THE ARSENIC TO THE KIDS — WHEN ARE WE GOING TO FACE REALITY AND NAIL 'EM?!
REALITY?!... ...NAIL 'EM?!
MAN, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT REALITY! WHEN THE UNDERWORLD STOPS PAYING GRAFT ON THE ARSENIC SALES IN THIS CITY — THAT'S WHEN WE'LL NAIL 'EM!!
SO WAKE UP TO THE FACTS AS THEY REALLY ARE — !!
THIS ISN'T JUST COPS 'N' ROBBERS ANYMORE, JEFF —
— SO, UNTIL YOU GET THE WORD FROM ME...
LAY OFF!!

SO THIS IS THE 'MEETING PLACE'! FORMIDABLE... THEY MUST HAVE MILLIONS IN ARSENIC PILLS STASHED AWAY HERE!
WHOEVER 'WASTED' THAT 'SENIC DIDN'T WANT ME POKING AROUND!
WELL THAT'S TOUGH!... 'CAUSE AN ARMY COULDN'T KEEP ME OUT OF HERE!
SOON...
INSIDE...
THE SEARCH BEGINS...
GOT IT!!
..HMM! IN A PAINTED COGNAC BOTTLE, YET!
JIGGLE JIGGLE JIGGLE
WHA-?!
SORRY, PAL! NO 'CHIT-CHAT' TIME NOW!
CRAK
SAME GOES FOR YOU 'BLACK BELT'!
HAI!!
TAKE A PILL, 'PUSHER'! WANT SOME MORE?! ..LIKE ONE FOR EVERY KID YOU SOLD 'EM TO?!
KYAH

LATER, BACK AT THE STATION...
SMAASH!
ANYONE WANT TO HELP ME 'BOOK' THIS OL' DUDE?
YOU STUPID DAMN COP! I'LL BE OUT OF HERE IN FIVE MINUTES!!!
OVER MY DEAD BODY, MISTER!
GET IN THERE, PUNK!
OUTSIDE THE STATION, A CAR PULLS UP.. STOPS..
IN IT, TWO MEN WAIT... WITH DEADLY INTENT!
WHAT IN HELL'S GOIN' ON HERE?!
ALL RIGHT, LANDERS — WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PROVE?
PROVE? NOTHING, CAPTAIN... JUST DOING MY JOB!
IF YOU THINK YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING, FORGET IT!
FORGET IT??!! TELL A FEW HUNDRED 'SENICS' MOTHERS THEIR KIDS ARE DEAD.. AND LET'S SEE YOU FORGET IT, AUSTIN!!!
YOU LIVE WITH THAT! I CAN'T!!
HEY, JEFF! YOU OUTTA YOUR MIND, OR WHAT?!
BANG

INTRODUCING...

JON FURY ..IN JAPAN

by PFC ALEXANDER TOTH '55

FIFTY MILES OFF THE SOUTHEAST COAST OF JAPAN DRONES A MIGHTY TRANSCONTINENTAL AIRLINER BOUND FOR TOKYO, AND BEARING AMONG ITS MANY PASSENGERS...

ONE JON FURY, AGE 33, RANGER IN WORLD WAR II — AND OF LATE, A SUCCESSFUL HOLLYWOOD PUBLISHER...

JON'S MISSION? TO FIND HIS TWIN BROTHER, DIRK, WHO TOOK HIS DISCHARGE FROM SERVICE IN JAPAN THREE MONTHS AGO FOR REASONS UNKNOWN...

NOT HAVING HEARD FROM HIM SINCE, JON SEEKS THE MOTIVE FOR DIRK'S ACTIONS — AND TOO, SEEKS DIRK!

FASTEN YOUR SAFETY BELTS, PLEASE! AND NO SMOKING SIR—!

OH, YES! SORRY, MISS!

MINUTES LATER, THE POWERFUL SHIP BEGINS ITS FINAL LANDING APPROACH... DROPPING SWIFTLY...

TO MAKE ITS TOUCHDOWN — AT TOKYO'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...

WHERE JON, ONCE AGAIN, SETS FOOT ON FOREIGN SOIL.. IN TOKYO, THE CITY WHICH HOLDS GREAT DANGER FOR JON FURY!!

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK...

the ADVENTURES of...
jon FURY ...in JAPAN
EPIC ALEXANDER TOTH, '59
A PRINING IN JAPAN TO FIND HIS TWIN BROTHER, DIRK, JON HAS CHECKED IN AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, WHERE HE AWAITS WORD FROM 'STARS and STRIPES' JOURNALIST SHAD PORTER WHO HAS BEEN AIDE-DE-CAMP FOR JON IN HIS SEARCH.. AND IS A CLOSE FRIEND TO BOTH BROTHERS! NOW, SUDDENLY...
RRRRRRRINNNG!!!
YES, THIS IS JON... WHO..?
SHAD PORTER, JON.. IN THE LOBBY! BE UP IN A MINUTE..
MINUTES LATER
GOOD TO SEE YOU, SHAD! ANY NEWS OF-
OF DIRK? NO TRACE OF HIM-! NO ONE KNOWS HIS WHEREABOUTS, JON! SORRY..
21¾
THE AIR FORCE HAS HIS FLAT'S ADDRESS FILED, BUT HE MOVED OUT A MONTH AGO! I WIRED YOU THAT NEWS, JON!
YES.. SHAD, I APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS! BUT WE'RE NO CLOSER NOW THAN WE WERE AT THE START, BLAST IT!
DIRK'S GIRL.. GAYE ALLEN, HASN'T EVEN HEARD FROM HIM — AND THEY'RE ENGAGED TO BE WED, TOO, JON!
YOU WROTE THAT SHE WAS A D.A.C. DIDN'T YOU, SHAD? THAT RIGHT?
YUP! WORKS AT TOKYO QUARTERMASTER DEPOT, IN SHINAGAWA! SWELL GIRL! I WROTE UP THEIR ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR 'EM IN 'STARS and STRIPES' — FOUR MONTHS AGO...
MMHMM! YOUR COAT, SHAD. PUT IT ON..
WHERE TO, JON?
TO MEET MY FUTURE SISTER-IN-LAW, NOW!!
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK...

the ADVENTURES of...
JON FURY ...in JAPAN
by PFC ALEXANDER TOTH '55
JON, WITH WRITER SHAD PORTER, IS ENROUTE TO MEET HIS BROTHER DIRK'S FIANCÉE, GAYE ALLEN...
WHAT SORT OF A GIRL IS SHE, SHAD?
VERY BLOND, BRIGHT.. AND BEAUTIFUL, OLD BOY!
MINUTES LATER...
HI, GAYE.. THIS IS..!
DIRK!! YOU'VE COME BACK! OH HOLD ME CLOSE, MY DARLING..CLOSE!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, DIRK? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? .. ARE YOU..? NO.. IT CAN'T BE... Y-YOU'RE NOT...
I-I'M SORRY, GAYE.. WE SHOULD HAVE PHONED YOU FIRST! I'M JON FURY... DIRK'S TW..!
CATCH HER, JON! SHE'S FAINTING.
I'VE GOT HER—! POOR KID... SHOCKED HER INTO... WAIT!! SHAD!!
THAT'S IT!! THE WAY TO DIRK, SHAD..
WH—? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, JON?
GAYE MISTOOK ME FOR DIRK, SHAD — HIS OWN FIANCÉE!!
YES..YES? I STILL CAN'T..
DON'T YOU SEE? IF SHE DID, SO WILL OTHERS WHO KNOW DIRK!! ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS FOLLOW A TRAIL OF SURPRISED, SHOCKED, OR FRIENDLY FACES..! THEY MUST EVENTUALLY LEAD ME TO HIM... AND THEY WILL!
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK...

THE ADVENTURES OF
JON FURY
...IN JAPAN
BY
PAUL ALEXANDER TOTH, 1945
JON HAS FOUND THE KEY TO FINDING HIS MISSING TWIN BROTHER DIRK — THAT OF USING HIS RESEMBLANCE TO HIM!! JON WALKS THROUGH TOKYO'S STREETS.. KEEPING ALERT..FOR A SIGN OF RECOGNITION FROM THE PASSERSBY..THREE DAYS PASS, WITH NO LEADS..ON THE FOURTH, HE HAS LUNCH WITH DIRK'S FIANCEE, GAYE ALLEN, WHO IS DISTRAUGHT OVER HIS INEXPLICABLE DISAPPEARANCE...
YES, JON! I'M SURE IT WILL WORK!
IMPERIAL
CONSIDERING HOW EVEN I MISTOOK YOU FOR DIRK,, I WAS SO SURE YOU ...
I-I KNOW, GAYE! FORGIVE ME FOR STARTLING YOU THE OTHER DAY... IT WAS THOUGHTLESS OF ME TO CAUSE YOU SUCH ANXIETY!
OH, JON - PLEASE BE CAREFUL! I WANT DIRK BACK, BUT I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MY FUTURE BROTHER-IN-LAW IN THE PROCESS,,
NEVER FEAR, LITTLE GAYE! DIRK AND I WILL SOON BE DUSTING OFF OUR OL' BLUE SERGES FOR YOUR BIG DAY— WAIT!! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK,,,
JON!! WHAT IS IT?
YOU, THERE — I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU,, WAIT, SIR — SAY, EH? VERY WELL, THEN -
NOW, THEN, MY ELUSIVE FRIEND A FEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,,
TAKE YOUR PAWS FROM ME, SIR!! YOU ACT LIKE A MADMAN! QUICKLY!!
YOU KNOW MY FACE,, YOU KNOW DIRK!! NOW WHERE IS HE? TALK!
SUMO! SUMO!
JON!! BEHIND YOU!!
WHA-? UHH,,
KRAK!!
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

THE ADVENTURES OF ...

JON FURY ...IN JAPAN

BY PFC ALEXANDER TOTH '55.

JON HAS FOUND WHAT HE BELIEVES TO BE A LEAD IN HIS SEARCH FOR HIS TWIN BROTHER, DIRK, IN THE APPEARANCE OF A SINISTER 'FAT MAN', WHO STARED VICIOUSLY AT JON DURING HIS LUNCH DATE WITH GAYE ALLEN AT THE IMPERIAL ... ALERT, JON ROSE TO QUESTION HIM, AWARE THAT HE'D BEEN TAKEN FOR DIRK! BUT HE WAS 'CHOPPED DOWN' FROM BEHIND BY THE 'FAT MAN'S' SUMO BODY GUARD — NOW, A MINUTE AFTER THE SCENE, JON TRIES TO SHAKE OFF THE EFFECTS OF THE BLOW AND...

JON! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ZZ

WOW! MY NECK! GAYE — WHERE IS HE —? WHERE..?

THAT WAY, SIR!

THE PARKING AREA!!

JON! DON'T..

THERE..

SUMO! LOOK! IF YOU HAVE TO, RUN HIM DOWN!!

THE HEAVY CAR VEERS TOWARD JON...

BLASTED FOOLS—

LICENSE 7-1213! GOT IT!

7-1213

LATER, IN JON'S ROOM, A CALL FROM THE HOTEL MANAGER — AND...

GAYE! HE DID IT! HE CALLED THE LAND OFFICE RECORD SECTION FOR ME! THAT CAR IS LICENSED TO A BERTRAM KRAG, IMPORTER-EXPORTER, OF TOKYO, AND—!

JON! THAT NAME KRAG!!

KRAG!! DIRK FLEW CARGO FOR A 'KRAG' ONLY WEEKS BEFORE HE DISAPPEARED!!

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK...

THE ADVENTURES OF
JON FURY
...IN JAPAN
by
ALEXANDER TOTH, '55
JON, LEARNING THE IDENTITY OF THE 'FAT MAN', WHO, WITH HIS SUMO BODYGUARD, ATTEMPTED TO KILL HIM, HAS FOUND HIM TO BE BERTRAM KRAG, HEAD OF AN IMPORT-EXPORT FIRM! GAVE ALLEN REVEALS HIM AS THE MAN WHO EMPLOYED DIRK FURY TO FLY CARGO HOPS JUST A FEW WEEKS PRIOR TO DIRK'S DISAPPEARANCE! A FURTHER CHECK ON KRAG, THROUGH 'STARS and STRIPES' JOURNALIST SHAD PORTER, COMPLETES THE PICTURE, FOR..
..KRAG HIT TOKYO IN '48, ARRIVING FROM CASABLANCA, WHERE HE SPENT THE WAR YEARS, AND SET UP HIS TRADING COMPANY HERE! KRAG'S PROSPERED AT A FANTASTIC CLIP IN THAT TIME! THOUGH TO ALL APPEARANCES HIS TRADE SEEMS LEGITIMATE, SHAD CLAIMS HE'S SUSPECT OF DEALING IN SMUGGLED GOODS — LINKING HIM WITH A RING OF HONGKONG SLY-GUYS WHO HAVE BEEN THUMBING THEIR LITTLE NOSES AT THE BRITISH AND JAPANESE TRADE COMMISSIONS FOR A LONG TIME NOW!
IF DIRK, WHILE PILOTING SAID 'HOT CARGO', BECAME AWARE OF THE CURVE HE'D BEEN TOSSED, AND LET SOMETHING SLIP TO KRAG ABOUT IT, THAT WOULD ACCOUNT FOR-
..FOR DIRK'S DISAPPEARANCE! OH, JON — I HOPE HE.. HE ISN'T —!
I'VE THOUGHT OF THAT, TOO, GAYE! BUT DIRK'S NOT AN EASY MARK — SO SNAP OUT OF IT, WE'LL FIND HIM IN TIME FOR A JUNE WEDDING!
NOW LET'S TAKE YOU HOME! I'VE GOT TO RE-TURN SOME THINGS KRAG'S 'GOON' LEFT WITH ME!
WHAT'S THAT, JON?
A WHOPPING HEADACHE, AND A FEW ASSORTED LUMPS!!
LATER, AT KRAG'S OFFICES...
YOU!!
TRICK OR TREAT?
HOW DID YOU-? H-HOW-?
YOUR LICENSE PLATES!
RECOVERING FROM MOMENTARY SURPRISE, KRAG PRESSES A SMALL BUTTON, HIDDEN UNDER HIS DESK, WITH HIS KNEE.. AN ALARM THAT..
SUMMONS SUMO FROM THE NEXT ROOM
WHAT IS WR-? AIEEE! HIM!
WELL, WELL, WELL — SUMO! GLAD YOU MADE IT! NOW THAT WE'RE ALL HERE, LET'S HAVE A PARTY!!
... NEXT WEEK — 'SHOWDOWN'

THE ADVENTURES OF
JON FURY ...IN JAPAN
by PFC ALEXANDER TOTH '55
JON, ARMED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT BERTRAM KRAG, IMPORT-EXPORT BARON, HIRED DIRK TO PILOT HIS COMPANY'S TOKYO-HONGKONG AIR CARGO RUNS, JUST WEEKS PRIOR TO HIS DISAPPEARANCE, SEEKS OUT KRAG AT HIS TRADING COMPANY'S OFFICES — HIS APPEARANCE THERE PRESENTS A CHALLENGE TO KRAG — A CHALLENGE MET ONLY TOO EAGERLY FOR HIM BY HIS BODYGUARD, SUMO, WHO LUNGES AT JON LIKE A MADDENED BEAR .. FOR THIS IS .. THE SHOWDOWN !!
YOU WON'T LEAVE US, WILL YOU BERTIE ?
BE CAREF- !! AHH .. OOF !!
CRASH
SKINNY DOG ! SUMO BREAK YOU LIKE STICK !
FEINT, HIT, AND STAY OUT OF HIS REACH, FURY, OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE ANOTHER SUNSET-
A SIDE-STEP .. AND THEN ..
UKKK !
- AND MAY THE BETTER MAN WIN, EH, SUMO ?
HELP !
THE BIG HULK, FOR ALL OF HIS STRENGTH PROVES TO BE AT A DISADVANTAGE .. FOR JON SLASHES BLOW AFTER BLOW AND DARTS BACK, OUT OF HIS RANGE ...
CAN'T KEEP THIS UP .. FOREVER !
WAP
KRAG RECOVERS, TAKES IN THE SCENE BEFORE HIM, AND WITH A COMPLACENT SNEER, REACHES INTO HIS OVERTURNED DESK ..
.. AND PRODUCES .. A GUN !!
AS I SEE IT, MY ARTFUL FRIEND, YOU ARE, AT BEST, A DOOMED MAN .. FOR YOU ...
WAK
-CANNOT AVOID YOUR FATE ! IF YOU'LL NOTICE, I HAVE YOU WELL COVERED ... AND SINCE THE VICTOR OF THIS BATTLE SHALL PRESENT A PRIME TARGET ..
KRAK
.. YOU ARE BEATEN, NO MATTER WHICH ONE OF US IS LEFT TO FINISH YOU OFF .. SUMO, OR ME !!
DOESN'T GIVE A MAN MUCH INCENTIVE, DOES IT ?
UHNNN
NEXT WEEK — THE CHOICE !

ABOUT JON FURY....

"JON FURY WAS CREATED back in the late '40s, and I, in my youthful naivete, intended to sell him as 'Sunday page only.' I had title, logo, storylines, sketches, and formats for page designs all worked up—but soon, caught up in heavier comic book workload, 'Jon Fury,' like many other original adventure strip 'workups,' was filed away for 'future use.'

"Years later, 1955, I found myself in the U.S. Army, in Tokyo, Japan. The Art Editor post on our camp newspaper was created so that I might lend a hand. The weekly was 8-pages, printed on multigraph machines, 600 copies at a time, and it had one artist—a Japanese civilian employed to redraw the logo each issue and letter new article headlines!

"Out of 'need' — the paper's and my own — I drew all sorts of gag, editorial, and service cartoons to dress up the pages of typed columns. Remembering 'Jon,' I set out to recreate him and to write and draw a 16-week storyline, one full page a week. WAC Capt. 'Millie' McNulty, our adjutant, gave me an okay on my presentation—and I went off to work out ways and means of drawing the strip for the multigraph process . . .

"I discovered that I'd have to draw print size, about 6" x 9", and in multigraph pencil on wax-surfaced multigraph paper!

"Terrible news, this! Erasures ruined the wax layer . . . thus, I blue-penciled as lightly as possible, and then used the multigraph pencil for the 'finish'—a disaster! As the first five weekly pages will show. I kept badgering 'Omi,' the staff artist, and the gang in the press room to suggest an ink that would allow me the use of my rapidograph pens. But I was told that inked drawings on the wax-surfaced paper would 'lift' and 'tear' the images, and we'd have to discard the original before the end of our 600 print run. Damn!

"I borrowed a jug of press ink, and began to mix up varying proportions of it and the Pelikan font ink I normally used in my rapidograph, to find a balanced mixture thick enough to flow through my pen without fouling the very thin ink value inside!

"After many tries and a few ruined pens I hit it!"

"Test runs proved it worked without 'tearing up' the drawn image—on 50-odd prints. But would it work for our 600 print run? We had to chance it, as time was too short for longer test runs. So—we did it! I can't remember if it was the fifth or sixth page that was the first 'inked' job . . . but the change is noticable. My pen was fine-line, and allowed me detail and lettering consistency impossible to achieve with the multigraph pencil of yore. So one more wrinkle was ironed out! In the year I wrote and drew 'Jon Fury', by pens were corroded by the creosote-base press ink, and I went through many of 'em—all at my own expense.

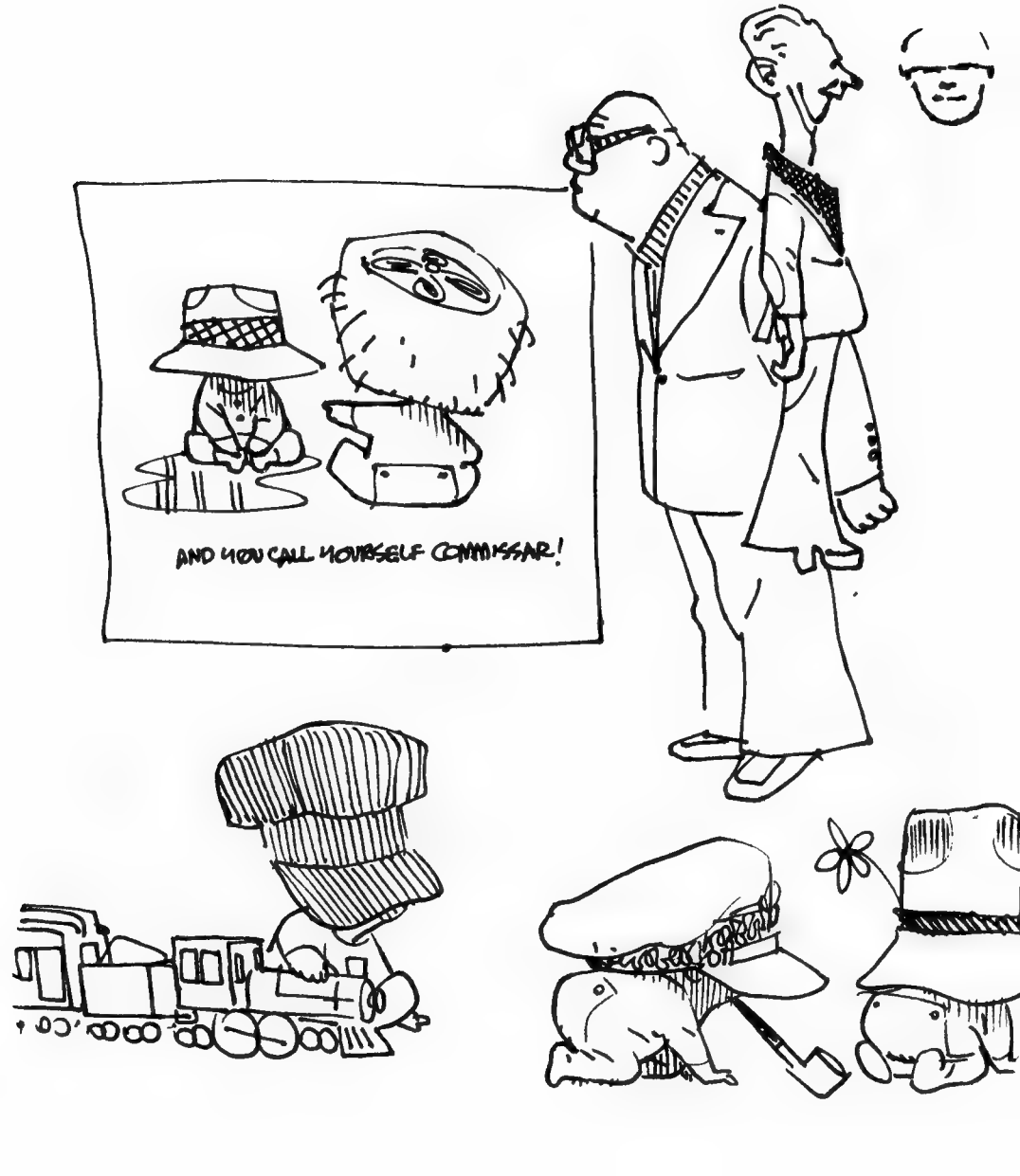
"Re: That year. It was one of the happiest, most fulfulling years in memory, for the strip was well - received by the men on our post, and was the first item read by them at evening chow on Fridays — our distribution day. (And 'Jon Fury' won our paper two consecutive awards for entertainment features in the annual Department of Defense service-wide newspaper competition!)

"I was delighted with the men's good-natured comments, pro and con, and their questions about 'next week,' etc., while in that evening mess—and I felt assured about writing my own continuity, on a 'demand deadline' basis. (I remember writing about six weeks' dialogue/scene description on one very happy day. This was in the second 16-week adventure, wherein I first introduced 'The Fox.') My flurries of writing, since then, have been few and far between—my eternal frustration, in fact!

"I loved every minute of it, tough or easy, from day to day, between my other duties on the paper. I was taking on much more responsibility for the work previously assigned to our civilian artist, and the added job of Non - Com PIO, covering and writing news stories in and relating to our service life, working with Army photographers, and so on, all chewed up most of my 8-to-5 time—and necessitated many long nights on the board to keep ol' 'Jon' on deadline!

"The period of the mid-'50s had an idiom so different from today's. Thus, my writing in 'Jon Fury' reflects some of it. The world was younger, so was I—both a bit less jaded that we are today. The Korean War had cooled down, and prospects of all kinds, for all of us, then, seemed brighter. I fancied 'Jon Fury' sold, syndicated, and successful—but he just didn't make it. And other American Indians, like 'Jon,' didn't either. In war, in peace . . . or in print!"

COMMANDERS DIGEST
VOL. 18, NO. 16, OCTOBER 16, 1975

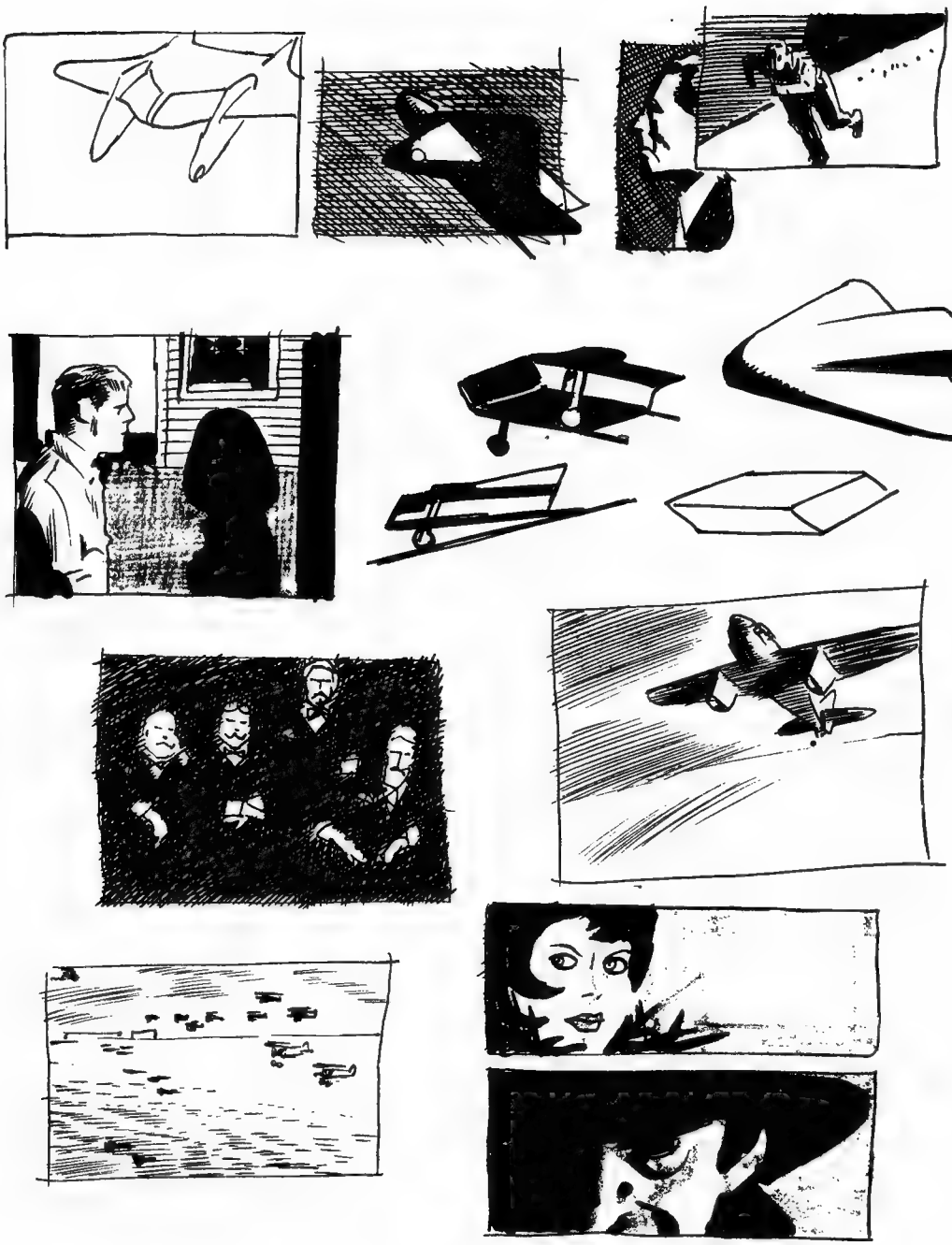

AND YOU CALL YOURSELF COMMISSAR!

SKETCH PAD

FLYNN OR McCREA ?
CHANCE
POWELL — (BICKFORD)
T-J-BARNETT (ROBERT BARRAT OR JACK HOLT)
VIVIAN POWELL (CAROLE LOMBARD OR OLIVIA de HAVILLAND)
BARNETT'S PRIVATE SECRETARY
GUILA ?
JEFF JORDAN — WILLIAM CHING OR RICHARD WEBB
TOM BAXTER ?
NURSE FRANCIS
?

MOTIVE
OPPORTUNITY
MEANS

1930S
CALIFORNIA
SHERIFF'S
DEP-
UTY



JUNE, 1925
YUBA CITY.
CALIFORNIA
ABC
DEF
GHI
JKL
MNO
PQR
STU
VWX
YZ

THE WORK OF ALEX TOTH

by GIL KANE

By the end of the nineteen-forties, comics had already been through their most creative phase. There was the break away from the style of the newspaper strip when comic books began to find their own identity. And there was the development of individual talents like Will Eisner, Jack Kirby, Jack Cole, Lou Fine, Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster, Bob Kane and Charlie Biro.

The last important development of the 40's had seen the "realism" of the crime story void the glories of the superhero. The emphasis was on realistic drawing which evolved from the "true" story and focused the artist's attention on naturalistic detail. However, most artists in comics were men without any real academic training and the 30's and 40's were devoted to learning the story-telling techniques of this new form. It wasn't until 1950 that two distinct influences came to bear.

One, Wally Wood, evolved into a rallying point for most of the artists who thought in terms of bravura drawing, while most of the others came under the influence of Alex Toth.

Toth had started as a Caniff-type artist whose emphasis was on characterization and design. By 1950 he had transcended all of his influences and had become the finest artist that comics ever had.

Toth introduced the techniques of magazine illustration into comic books. His focus was on picture making and its elements, drawing, composition, pattern, tonal values, depth of field and shape. Toth's investigation into stating form and design with utmost economy lifted the craftsmanship level of the entire field. Next to Eisner he was its most important educator.

In this time, when Kirby and the super-hero justifiable dominate comic books, Toth is still producing work of extraordinary perceptiveness. Toth has never had the popular regard of Kirby, Frazetta, or Wood, because the bravura styles of these men are infinitely more appealing to comic book readers than the complex subtleties and abstractions of Toth's style. However, Toth along with Kirby, Eisner and Kurtzman represents an elite of comic book artistry.

It may be a while before the level of understanding on the part of average comics fans rises to a full appreciation of Toth's work, but artists right now are learning from it with envious eyes.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following pages of Alex Toth art were loaned to us by Bill Chadbourne, Art Director of the American Forces Press Service. They are to appear in a forthcoming book by Toth. .. here printed for the first time.

A LOVE-STRUCK MOSS GATHERED SOME STONES,
TO MAKE THAT Vi HIS BRIDE!
HE WENT INTO HOCK AND GOT A LOAN,
BEFORE SAILING ON THE MORNING TIDE!
A ROLLING STONE
ART - ALEX TOTH
A MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE...? SOUNDS EXCITING, AL...!
IT'S GOING TO BE A LONELY SIX MONTHS FOR ME, Vi, BABY...

DON'T JIVE ME, ALVIN MOSS!
I'LL BET THERE'S A BLOND ITALIAN WAITING DOCKSIDE RIGHT NOW!
BE SERIOUS, Vi! I'M TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS...
JUST SAY IT..!
WELL, I-I WANT YOU TO BE HERE WHEN I GET BACK, AND...
WHERE AM I GOING? I'VE GOT THREE YEARS OF COLLEGE LEFT!...
I WANT YOU TO WAIT FOR ME.. WORRY ABOUT ME...
WAIT AND WORRY, EH?
...AND THEN MARRY ME!
M-MARRY? YOU..YOU REALLY ARE SERIOUS, AREN'T YOU, HONEY?
2

LATER.. ABOARD SHIP...
...AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED, MOSS? DID YOU SLIP HER THE OL'...
RIGHT, MAN! I SLIPPED HER THE OL' RING!
WHAT?!
I'D ORDERED VI'S RINGSET FROM THIS AD IN THE 'GI TIMES'.. ONLY $198.00!
NO, NO! I MEAN DID YOU GET...
I GOT TWO RINGS, MAN.. ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING.. WITH ELEVEN DIAMONDS! BANDS ARE 14 KARAT GOLD!
HOW MANY CARATS ARE THE ROCKS?
LET'S SEE.. MM, THE AD DOESN'T SAY, BUT DON'T WORRY.. THEY ARE GUARANTEED DIAMONDS!
OH, I'M NOT WORRIED! I'D JUST LIKE TO HEAR WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU POPPED OL' VI THE ROCK!
YOU KNOW, YOU ARE ONE CRUDE DUDE!
3

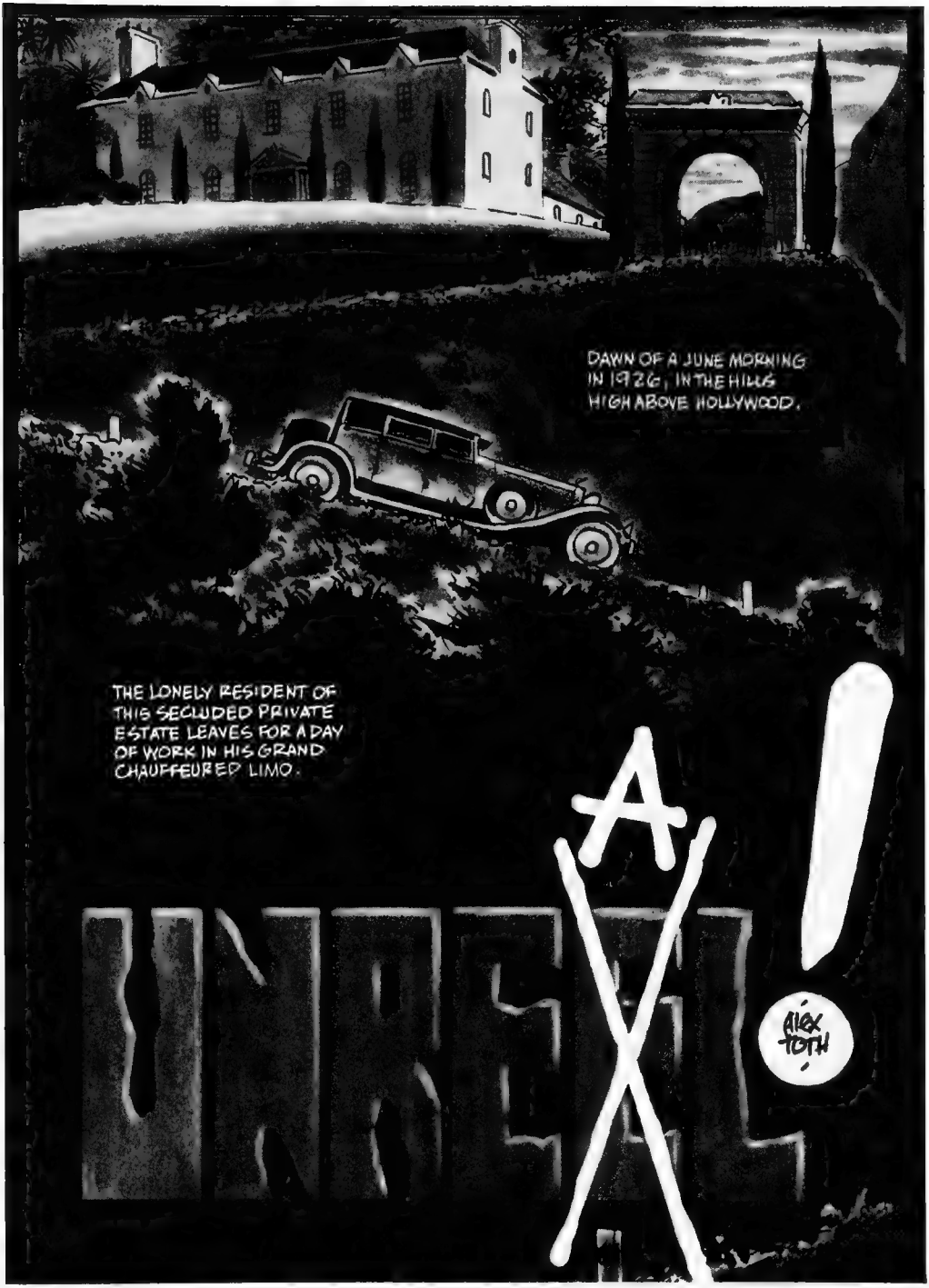
MAIL CALL
SNIFF
MMMM, OH, MAN!
HEY, MOSS! HERE'S ANOTHER PERFUMED CHAPTER IN YOUR ROMANCE!
N-NO!
SH-SHE SENT ME HER WEDDING INVITATION!!
WHAT?
DON'T IT STILL TAKE TWO TO GET MARR ED?
ONE MORE SMART-ASS WORD AND I'M GONNA STOMP YOUR RED NECK!
LATER:
CHAPLAIN, IT WASN'T ANY RACE RIOT!
I JUST BLEW UP!
I GOT THIS 'DEAR JOHN' AND I'D PUT UP WITH HIS STUPID MOUTH AS LONG AS I COULD! SO WE TANGLED!
AND SO BOTH OF YOU HAVE BEEN DENIED LIBERTY AT OUR NEXT PORT!
4

IT'S OKAY!
I'M OUTTA BREAD ANYWAY! THAT FOXY CHICK STILL HAS MY RING, AND I NEVER GOT ANYTHING .. EXCEPT THE BILL!
A COSTLY BUT VALUABLE LESSON! HOWEVER — WHEN WE MAKE PORT, I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE LEGAL OFFICE! MAYBE THE LAW CAN REDEEM YOUR RING!
IN PORT:
UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S NO FEDERAL STATUTE IN A CASE LIKE THIS! IT'S STATE LAW!
BUT — YOU SAID THAT MY STATE PROTECTS ME!?
YES, BUT YOU WEREN'T LIVING IN YOUR STATE AT THE TIME YOU GAVE HER THE RING! AND YOUR FIANCE'S STATE DOESN'T HAVE SUCH A LAW!
CHAPLAIN, COULD WE STOP BY THE SHIP'S STORE? I STILL HAVE THE WEDDING RING HALF OF THE SET... MAYBE THE JEWELER WOULD BUY IT!
5

LATER
$35.00 ?!!
BUT I PAID $198.00 FOR THE TWO-RING SET...
..WITH ELEVEN DIAMONDS —TOTAL!
NOW
THERE ARE SIX STONES ON THIS RING ALONE!
THERE'S DIAMONDS AND THERE'S DIAMONDS, SAILOR! THESE ARE ALL POOR QUALITY!
YOU MEAN THEY DON'T HAVE MANY CARATS?
A JEWELER LOOKS FOR THE 'FOUR C'S': CARAT WEIGHT, CUT, COLOR, AND CLARITY!
YOU CAN SEE PART OF IT YOURSELF!
I DON'T SEE...
BUT YOU SHOULD!
THERE'S NO BRILLIANCE HERE! IT'S COLOR IS YELLOW! AND ABOUT THOSE CARATS...
6

... A CARAT IS DIVIDED INTO 100 POINTS! THEREFORE, A 50 POINT STONE -- AVERAGE FOR AN ENGAGEMENT RING -- WEIGHS HALF A CARAT! ...
... I JUDGE CLARITY BY THE ABSENCE OF IMPERFECTIONS -- LIKE SPOTS, OR BUBBLES! AS FOR COLOR, THERE ARE 240 SHADES OF WHITE DIAMONDS, ALONE!
... HERE, LOOK THROUGH THIS STONE'S THICKEST SIDE AT A WHITE BACKGROUND! THE WHITER IT IS, THE GREATER ITS VALUE!
... WHEN I SAY CUT, I MEAN SHAPE! MOST POPULAR FOR ENGAGEMENT RINGS IS THE ROUND -- IT'S THE CHEAPEST, COMPARED TO THE OVALS! NOW .. ABOUT FACETS ...
THANKS, BUT THAT'S ENOUGH! I'LL TAKE THE $35.00 ...
NOT FROM ME!
... I DON'T BUY!
... I SELL!
7

BACK AT SEA:
I WAS JUST DOIN' YOU A FAVOR, MOSS OL' BUDDY! I GOT YOUR MIND OFF YOUR "DEAR ALVIN" LETTER WITH ONE PUNCH, AND NOW WE'RE BOTH STUCK!
LET ME MAKE IT UP TO YOU, MAN! I STILL HAVE ONE OF THE RINGS -- I'LL LET YOU HAVE IT FOR, SAY... $90.00!
I DO HAVE A GIRL.. BUT NINETY BUCKS!
YOU WANTED TO KNOW HOW IT ALL WORKED OUT AFTER I GAVE Vi HER RING?
HAW! C'MON, MOSS! GIVE..
LET'S HEAR THE DETAILS!
NO DETAILS, BUT WITH THIS RING, AND YOUR SILVER TONGUE, YOU'D GET WHAT I DID! AND NO FOOLIN'!
I HATE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YA, MOSS — BUT YOU GOT A DEAL!
THE NINETY BUCK RING WON'T COVER AL'S LOSS,
BUT IT HELPED TO SOOTHE HIS PRIDE;
"JUST POP HER THAT RING, AND SHE'LL COME ACROSS!"
BUT THEN YOU'RE STUCK WITH A BRIDE!
END
8


DAWN OF A JUNE MORNING IN 1926, IN THE HILLS HIGH ABOVE HOLLYWOOD.
THE LONELY RESIDENT OF THIS SECLUDED PRIVATE ESTATE LEAVES FOR A DAY OF WORK IN HIS GRAND CHAUFFEURED LIMO.
UNREAL!
ALEX TOTH

6:31 AM
MORNING, MR. BOONE! BACKLOT FIVE TODAY, SIR!
G'MORNIN', MR. BOONE!
6
WOULDN'T YOU THINK THAT, WITH ALL HIS SUCCESS, FAME AND MONEY, HE COULD CRACK A SMILE ONCE IN A WHILE?
NOT ONCE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, HAS HE...
HOW DO YOU THINK MR. BABA BOONE WON HIS FAME AN' FORTUNE, PETE? HE'S NEVER SMILED! THAT'S HIS GIMMICK!
THE CAR WILL BE HERE AT 7:00 O'CLOCK SHARP, AS USUAL, MR. BOONE!
MORN'IN' MR. BOONE! I MADE THOSE SCRIPT CHANGES FOR YOU, SIR!
GOOD MORNING, MR. BOONE...!
MORNIN', SIR...!

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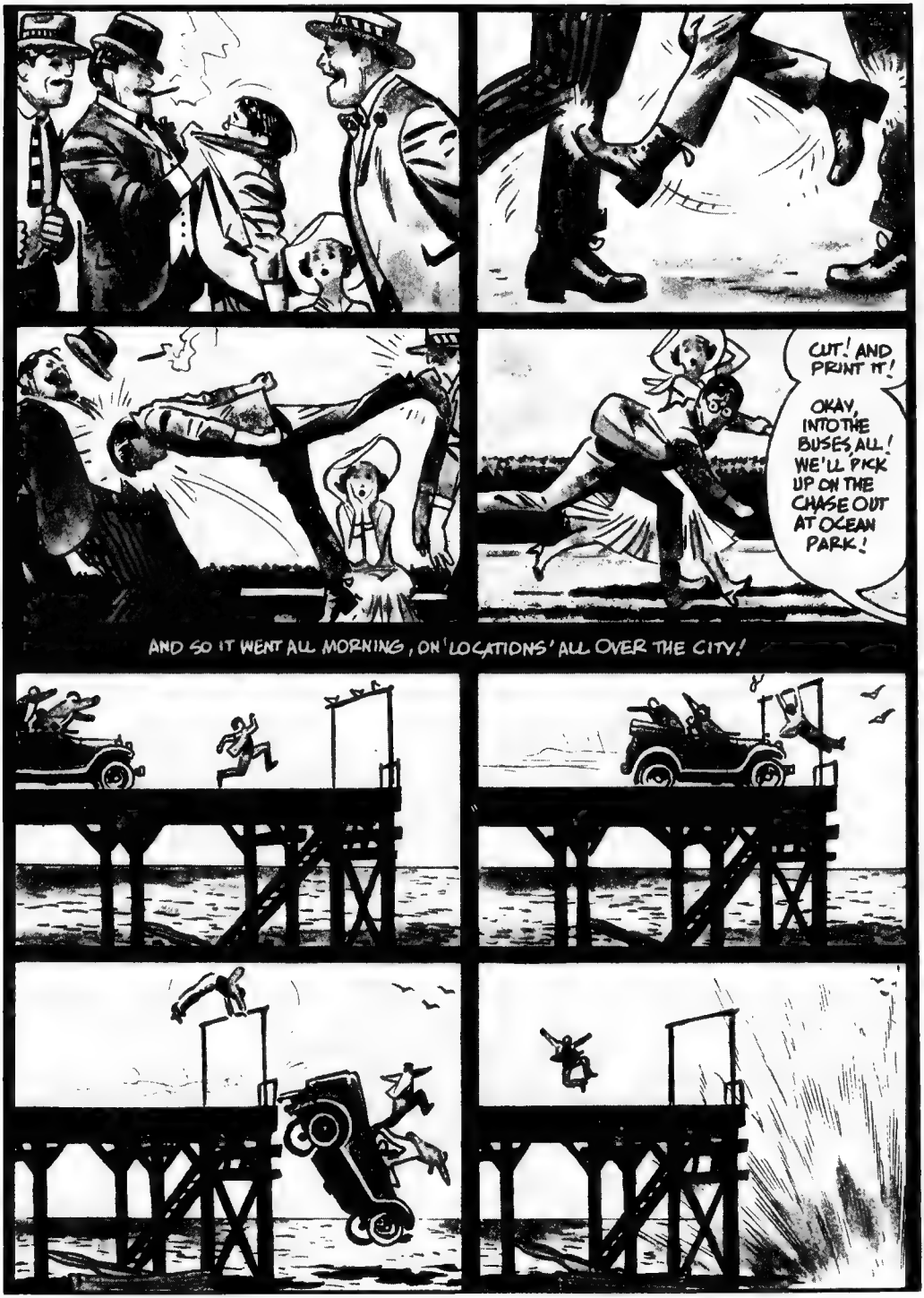
6:37 AM
HMMM... JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER MORNING!
THE CHEEK!
'BABA' BOONE
NEVER A WORD FOR 'PEASANTS' LIKE US! HMMPH!
SLAM!!
BUT HE'S A PRO, ALWAYS ON TIME, AND READY, LIKE CLOCKWORK! HE'S OKAY!
8:15 AM
WANTED ON THE SET, MR. BOONE!
'BABA' BOONE
NOK NOK
NOK NOK
8:20 AM
SLAM!
AAHH, MR. BOONE-!
WE'RE SET UP FOR THE CHASE SCENE TODAY
READY WHEN YOU ARE, SIR!
CAMERAS WERE ROLLING AT 8:30 AM ON BABA BOONE'S FIRST $4!


CUT! AND PRINT IT!
OKAY, INTO THE BUSES, ALL! WE'LL PICK UP ON THE CHASE OUT AT OCEAN PARK!
AND SO IT WENT ALL MORNING, ON 'LOCATIONS' ALL OVER THE CITY!

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NOON LUNCHBREAK...
WOULD MR. BOONE LIKE A BOX LUNCH?
YOU'RE NEW ON TH' CREW, HAL!
NO
MR. BOONE JUST RESTS DURING LUNCH BREAK!
GOSH, I CAN'T BLAME HIM... WHERE DOES HE GET TH' ENERGY —?!
?!?
AT 1:05 PM, 'BABA' BOONE WAS BACK AT WORK ON THE LONG, TIRING CHASE SEQUENCE...
BY 6:30, THE UNIT WAS BACK AT THE STUDIO.

AT 7:00 SHARP, MR. 'BABA' BOONE WAS ON HIS WAY HOME.
ARRIVING AT 7:30, HE MADE STRAIGHT FOR HIS BEDROOM UPSTAIRS.
HOUSE LIGHTS DIMMED AS A HUGE SURGE OF POWER RAN THROUGH THE LINES, AND WAS NOTED BY 'BABA' BOONE'S PRIVATE CHAUFFEUR AS HE CHANGED CLOTHES.
'MR. BOONE' WAS ALWAYS RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, NEVER NEEDED REMINDING. THAT'S WHY HIS SUPERIORS WERE ACCELERATING NEW PRODUCTION... AND WERE PLEASED!
HIS CHAUFFEUR'S GUISE WAS 'COVER' FOR HIS TRUE ROLE OF 'MONITOR' AND 'PROJECT-ENGINEER' ON THIS BIZARRE TEST CASE ... OF CREATING A TOP SILENT SCREEN STAR!
AN ELECTROMAGNETIC 'ANDROBOT', THE PERFECT MAN — SERVILE, CAPABLE OF GREAT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRENGTH AND DEXTERITY... WITH ALL THE TIMING SENSE, SKILL, AND TALENT REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB FOR WHICH HE'D BEEN PROGRAMMED AT 'BIRTH', THREE YEARS AGO... TO BE 'BABA' BOONE! THE NIGHTLY RECHARGING IS SELF-ADMINISTERED... 'BABA' WOULD BE IN TOP PEAK FORM BY 5:00 AM!
THE CHAUFFEUR MUSED ABOUT THE FUTURE — IN 1976 — FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW — AND THE PLANS TO HAVE ANDROBOTS PUT INTO POSITIONS IN HIGH FINANCE, BIG BUSINESS, BANKING, GOVERNMENT, THE WORLD OVER! BY '76, HE WONDERED, WOULD WE ELECT AN ANDROBOT ... PRESIDENT? HMM — COULD BE!

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EVERY KID NEEDS A HERO! EVERY KID NEEDS SOMEONE HE CAN LOOK UP TO... PATTERN HIS LIFE AFTER...
WE HAD LOTS OF HEROES BACK IN 1934... BUCK JONES, TOMMIX, TARZAN, LINDY, TAILSPIN TOMMY, CAPT. EASY, MAX BEAR, JACK ARMSTRONG, THE SHADOW, LONE RANGER AND GREEN HORNET...
BUT JUST OUTSIDE OF STILLWATER, MAINE OFF THE BANKS OF THE CHILL PENOBSCOTT, I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE TWO HEROES ALL MY OWN...
...TWO OF THE BIGGEST, BRAVEST LEGENDS EVER TO WALK GOD'S GREEN EARTH!

DADDY AND THE PIE

THIS HERE'S THE TRUE STORY OF MY DADDY... AND THE BIG BLUE GIANT WHO WE CAME TO KNOW AS THE PIE!
H-HE'S HURT BAD, SON! STAY BACK...!
ALEX TOTH

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WHEN I GOT MY FIRST REAL LOOK AT THE GIANT —
HE WAS LIKE NO MAN DAD OR I HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE!
HIS BURNIN' MACHINE WENT ...
BOOOOM
AN' NO AIR-PLANE EVER LOOKED LIKE TH' MACHINE HE'D JUST CRASHED IN EITHER — AN' JUST THEN ...
DAD DIDN'T SAY MUCH, 'CEPTIN' THAT, NO MATTER WHAT THE BIG MAN LOOKED LIKE, HE WAS HURT — AND AS CREATURES OF GOD, IT WAS OUR DUTY TO HELP HIM — SO WE DROVE HIM HOME WITH US!
MOM WAS AS SCARED OF TH' GIANT AS I WAS
BUT SEEING THAT HIS SKIN WAS SO BADLY BURNED AN' OOZIN' FROM TH' EXPOSED PLACES IN HIS TORN TUNIC, SHE TENDED TO HIS WOUNDS —
DOIN' TH' BEST SHE COULD —!
TWO DAYS LATER, THE GIANT, AT LAST, OPENED THEM BLUE EYES OF HIS!
AND WHEN HE SMILED UP AT US, RIGHT THEN WAS BORN A LOVING, CLOSE FRIENDSHIP THAT WOULD LAST UNTIL THE GRAVE!

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WHILE OUR GIANT GUEST WAS GETTIN' ALL WELL AGAIN, DAD DISCUSSED OUR PROBLEMS — NOT ONLY WAS THE STRANGE MAN DIFFERENT-LOOKING THAN US ALL — HIS LANGUAGE WAS DIFFERENT, TOO! ENGLISH WAS TOTALLY USELESS TO US!

DAD SET OUT TO FIND A WAY FOR US TO TALK TO HIM — STARTIN 'WITH TH' BASICS!

DICK HARRIS! —ME!

MY NAME IS DICK HARRIS!

D-DICK?

HE LEARNED FAST — BUT WHEN IT CAME TO US LEARNIN' HIS LANGUAGE — WE JUST COULDN'T HANDLE IT AT ALL —!

3-1470

HE TRIED TO MAKE IT SIMPLE FOR US — EVEN WROTE DOWN WHAT WE FIGURED HAD TO BE HIS NAME! ANOTHER PROBLEM—

DAMNED IF I CAN READ IT OR SAY IT, FELLA! NOPE —

DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'LL CALL YOU —! HMMM...

3-1470

BUT THEN...

DOROTHY, LOOK AT THIS — DON'T THESE FIRST THREE SYMBOLS OF HIS NAME LOOK LIKE NUMBERS? SEE 'EM —?

HMMM, YES —! LOOKS LIKE... 3.14!

3.14? ISN'T THAT THE NUMBER FOR PI —?! YES —

THE RATIO OF A CIRCLE'S CIRCUMFERENCE TO ITS DIAMETER, ISN'T IT? YES, I'M CERTAIN!

PI? PIE? YOU'RE RIGHT! LORD, I FORGOT THAT ALMOST AS SOON AS I LEARNED IT, YEARS AGO!

WELL, I THINK WE'VE COME UPON A NICE AND SHORT AMERICANIZED FORM OF YOUR NAME, BIG PI!

3-1470 PI

HA! FROM NOW ON, YOU ARE TO BE CALLED.. THE PIE!

PIE?

HA! PIE!

THE BIG BLUE GIANT SMILED, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, LAUGHED WITH US — SEEMING TO LIKE HIS NICKNAME ALMOST AS MUCH AS WE DID —! PIE!

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WHEN PIE WAS WELL ENOUGH TO WALK, HE'D LEARNED OUR LANGUAGE'S BASICS, TOO! ENOUGH TO TALK TO US AND UNDERSTAND SHORT, TERSE SENTENCES
THE FIRST THING HE ASKED TO DO WAS TO VISIT THE MACHINE HE HAD COME DOWN IN —
BUT THERE WAS LITTLE LEFT OF IT AFTER THE FIRE — JUST A MASS OF TWISTED MOLTED METAL —! HE WAS VERY SAD!
DAD SAID HE LOOKED LIKE A BIG LOST CHILD!
I DIDN'T REALLY KNOW WHAT DAD MEANT BY THAT UNTIL ONE NIGHT, PIE TOLD ME THAT HE... "COULD NEVER GO HOME AGAIN"...!
I WEPT... I THINK HE DID, TOO!
I-I'M SORRY, PIE —
PIE BECAME AN ADOPTED MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY!
MOM MADE HIM WORK CLOTHES WHILE HE AND DAD STUDIED AND TALKED FOR HOURS EVERY NIGHT OVER SOME FUNNY 'BLACK MAPS' AND BOOKS THAT DAD GOT FOR PIE DOWN AT THE TOWN LIBRARY —! DAD TOLD US THAT PIE HAD COME TO US...
...FROM A FARAWAY PLACE IN THE SKY! FROM A STAR WE CALLED "CASSIOPEIAE" — PIE CALLED IT BY ANOTHER NAME! MOM, DAD, AN' I COULDN'T PRONOUNCE EITHER ONE, FOR SURE! HE WAS AN EXPLORER OF SPACE, AN OBSERVER OF OUR EARTH — HE WASN'T TO LAND HERE, BUT HIS CRASH FIXED THAT — AND WE FOUND HIM THEN!
PIE TOLD US WONDERFUL STORIES ABOUT HIS WORLD AND ITS SCIENCE, INVENTIONS, STRUCTURES.. AND OF POWERFUL SHIPS THAT CARRIED WHOLE CITIES OUT INTO SPACE — BUT NOW HE'D NEVER SEE ANY OF THAT AGAIN! EVERYTHING HE HAD WAS GONE — ALL HE HAD LEFT WAS HIS..'GADGET'...!

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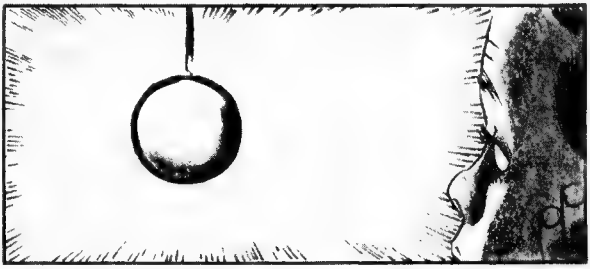
ONCE PIE SHOWED US HOW HIS 'GADGET' WORKED.. THE TIME HUNTERS MISTOOK OLD MR. THATCHER FOR A DEER AND PUT A BULLET IN HIS LEG —

THE WOUND LOOKED BAD. BUT PIE SAID HE'D FIX IT — AND, THEN, A FUNNY GREEN LIGHT FROM THE 'GADGET' PULLED THAT BULLET RIGHT OUT OF THE LEG — AND CLOSED THE WOUND !!

PIE SAID THE 'GADGET' COULD DO ALMOST ANYTHING.. THAT IT AMPLIFIED THOUGHTS .. AND MADE THEM A REALITY !



AFTER THAT, WORD ABOUT PIE SPREAD THROUGH TOWN —! MR. THATCHER TOLD US THAT FOLKS WERE SPOOKED UP OVER PIE'S 'MIRACLE BULLETWOUND HEALING CURE', BUT DAD PAID 'EM NO MIND AT ALL! AND HE AND PIE WENT ABOUT THE CHORES, AS USUAL — PIE HAD MANY HANDY TRICKS FOR BETTER FARMING, AND HOW TO MAKE OUR MACHINES RUN MORE EFFICIENTLY !

ONE DAY, WHEN DAD DROVE INTO TOWN FOR SUPPLIES, PIE WENT WITH HIM — HE WANTED TO SEE WHAT A TOWN LOOKED LIKE —

BUT STILLWATER WAS NOT FRIENDLY AT ALL TO PIE —
YOU KEEP THAT BLUE FREAK OUT O' THIS TOWN, HARRIS!
WE HEARD ABOUT HIS SORCERY!
WE DON'T WANT HIM AROUND!
ONE MAN TRIED TO HURT HIM —!
WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY, HARRIS! HEAR?
NO BLUE-SKINNED MONKEY'S GONNA SETTLE IN OUR TOWN! NO, SIR!

PIE WAS A MAN OF PEACE — BUT NOBODY COULD GET CLOSE TO HIM .. UNLESS HE WANTED 'EM TO — LIKE THEN!

DAD TRIED TO EXPLAIN, TO THE PUZZLED PIE, ABOUT PREJUDICE, FEAR AND HATRED — BUT PIE JUST SHOOK HIS HEAD ...

SPRING CAME .. DAD AN' PIE WERE WORKIN' LONG AN' HARD — PIE LIKED FARMING, AN' DAD LIKED PIE WORKIN' WITH HIM — LISTENIN' AN LEARNIN' FROM HIM BY TH' HOUR — ABOUT THE WORLD, AND SPACE —
EVERY NOW AN' THEN WORD CAME FROM MR. THATCHER ABOUT HOW UGLY THE TOWN FOLKS WERE GETTIN' ABOUT PIE — AN' AS HOW THEY WERE THREATENIN' TO COME OUT AN' — LYNCH 'IM! DAD SAID WE'D BE READY FOR 'EM, IF THEY DID!

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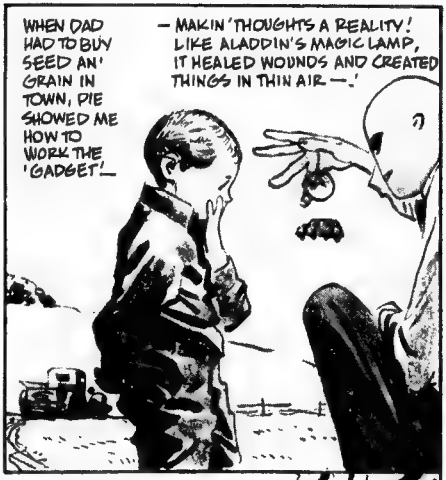
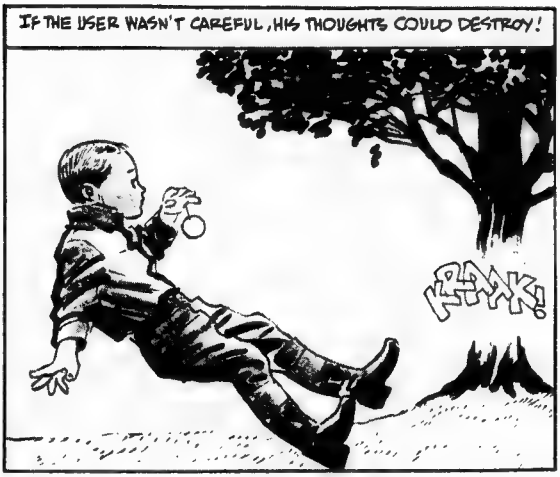

WHEN DAD HAD TO BUY SEED AN' GRAIN IN TOWN, PIE SHOWED ME HOW TO WORK THE 'GADGET'—
— MAKIN' THOUGHTS A REALITY! LIKE ALADDIN'S MAGIC LAMP, IT HEALED WOUNDS AND CREATED THINGS IN THIN AIR —.'



PIE LAUGHED — SOMEDAY, HE SAID, I'D LEARN HOW TO USE IT CORRECTLY — IF MY MIND WAS FILLED WITH THOUGHTS OF PEACE AN' LOVE — SO I'D BE SURE NOT TO DESTROY ANYTHING IN AN IMMATURE EMOTIONAL STATE!

I REMEMBER THAT NIGHT — DADDY WAS LATE COMIN' HOME FROM TOWN! WE ALL WORRIED! MOM SAID IT WASN'T LIKE HIM TO BE LATE —! WE WAITED, AND WAITED —

HE TOLD HOW TH' MEN IN TOWN HAD CORNERED DAD AN' BEAT HIM — BECAUSE OF OUR PIE!
PIE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND — BUT, AS TEARS WELLED UP IN HIS EYES, HE SAID HE KNEW WHAT HE HAD TO DO! HE'D HELP HIS FRIEND — MY DAD —

HE PUT ON HIS OL' PATCHED UP FLIGHT SUIT — AND HIS 'GADGET' — NOW WE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS THAT HE MEANT TO DO — AND WE FEARED FOR HIM!

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—FEARED THAT WE MIGHT NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN — EVEN TODAY, FOLKS TALK ABOUT —

—HOW HE WALKED INTO TOWN TO FIND DAD AN' TH' MEN WHO HURT HIM!

NO ONE WOULD HELP PIE, OR TELL HIM ANYTHING — HIS RAGE GREW — UNTIL, AS A LAST RESORT, HE BLASTED THE SALOON, DRUGSTORE, AN' TOWNHALL — ONLY THEN DID THE PEOPLE TELL HIM TH' NAMES OF DAD'S ATTACKERS —

PIE'S RAMPAGE THAT NIGHT NEARLY DESTROYED THE HOME OF EVERY MAN GUILTY OF HURTIN' DAD, WHILE WE WATCHED, LISTENED, WAITED — AND PRAYED THAT BOTH DAD AN' PIE WOULD COME HOME!

IT WAS NEAR SUN-UP WHEN PIE, HURT, AND STAGGERING WITH DAD IN HIS ARMS, CAME INTO VIEW — HE LOOKED LIKE THE STRONGEST AN' BRAVEST HERO ANYONE HAD EVER SEEN —

TEARS BURNED MY EYES AS MOM AND I RAN TO PIE AN' DAD — AN' THEN, PIE, AS IF PUSHED PAST TH' LIMITS OF HIS ENDURANCE.. FELL!

PIE'S WOUNDS TOLD OF HIS FIERCE FIGHT IN TOWN...

TWO WEEKS LATER, DAD WAS ABLE TO SIT UP IN BED...

WHERE WAS PIE, HE ASKED — MOM HAD TO TELL HIM HOW HE'D DIED — AN' HOW WE BURIED HIM! WE ALL CRIED THEN —! FOR OUR PIE! WHAT I DID WITH PIE'S 'GADGET,' IN LATER YEARS, IS QUITE ANOTHER STORY...

END

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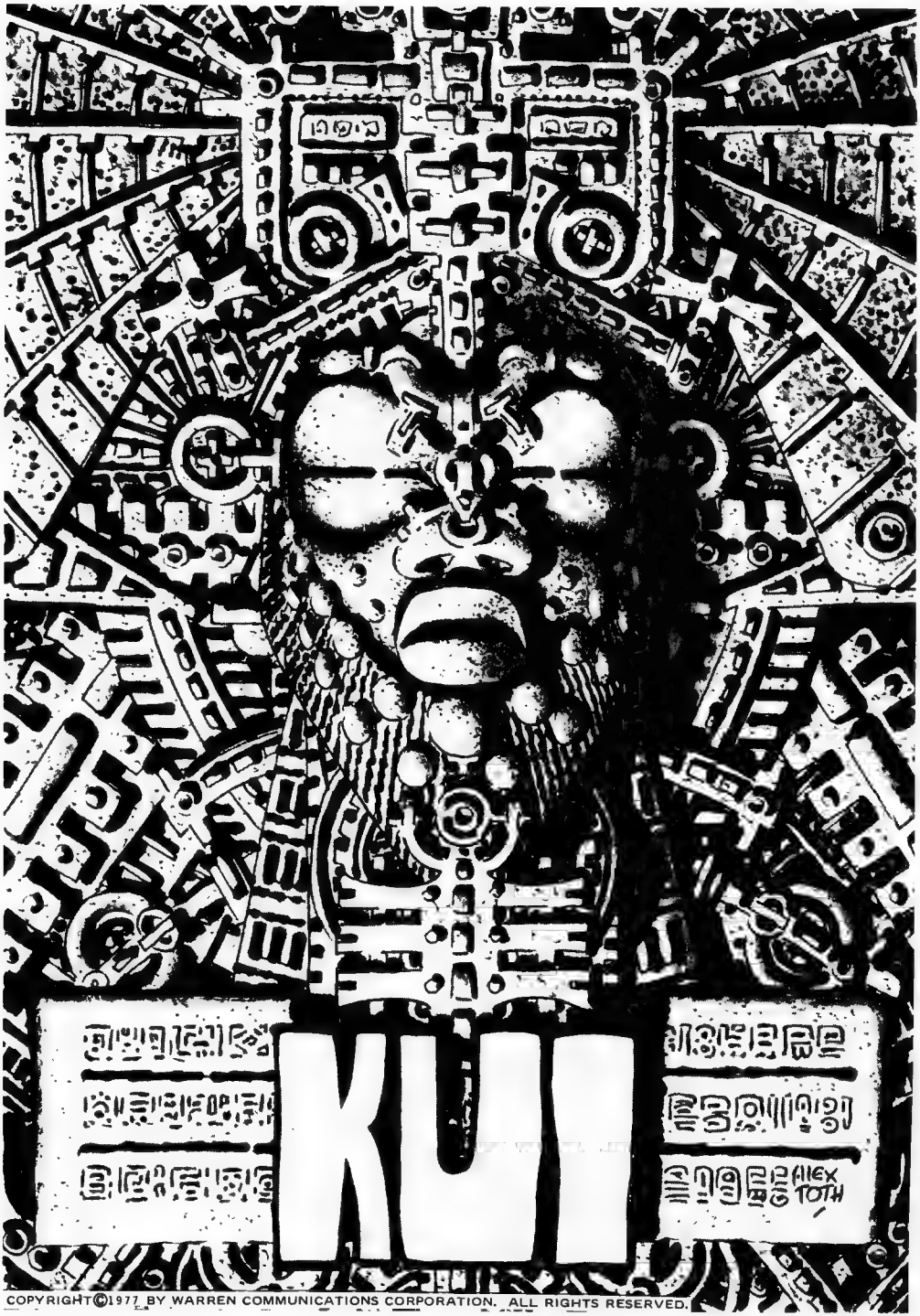

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SOME 227 AIR STATUTE MILES, SSW FROM NADI, FIJI, IN THE MIDST OF THOUSANDS OF VOLCANIC REEFS AND ISLETS, CAN BE FOUND THE LONG-UNINHABITED ISLAND OF KUILOA!
LOUISE, LOOK! THAT PEAK! THIS IS IT! KUI'S LOST ISLAND EMPIRE! BY GOD, THOSE OLD CHART DRAWINGS WERE CORRECT! LOOK AT IT!
HMMM, I AM... BUT I KEEP WISHING WE WERE BACK IN NADI!
SURF SEEMS FREE OF CORAL OR SAND BARS, HONEY...
...SHOULD HAVE NO HASSLE ROLLING RIGHT UP ON THE BEACH... AND PARKING IT AS PRETTY AS YOU PLEASE!
FIJI AIRENTAL
I'LL TURN 'ER ABOUT FOR AN EASY TAKEOFF ROLL RIGHT INTO THE SURF...
IT IS LOVELY, ROY, BUT I'M AFRAID TO BE SO ALONE 'WAY OUT HERE FOR A WEEK!
NONSENSE! FIJI AIR RENTAL HAS OUR FLIGHT PLAN AND ITINERARY! IF WE HAVEN'T COME BACK OR RADIO-PHONED BY NEXT THURSDAY NOON, THEY'LL COME A'LOOKIN'... NEVER FEAR!
...SWITCHES OFF! OKAY, HON', WE'RE HERE--!!
FIJI AIRENTAL

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TROPIC NIGHT FALLS...
LET'S TURN IN, HONEY...
...SO WE CAN START EARLY HIKIN' UP TH' KUI MOUNTAIN!
ALONE ON A ROMANTIC DESERT ISLE AT NIGHT, AND ALL YOU CAN THINK OF IS HI—WOOPS! ...MMMMM
AT MIDDAY AND 800 FEET UP KUI'S WESTERN SLOPE... A FIND!
LOUISE!! LOOK, A WALL!!
THE ANCIENT CARVED GLYPHS OF KUI--!!
WE'VE DONE IT!!
WE'LL FOLLOW THE WALL FACE AROUND UNTIL WE COME TO AN ENTRYWAY! IT CAN'T BE TOO FAR, LOUISE! NOT FAR!! HOHO...THINK OF IT!
AN 1100 YEAR OLD EMPIRE FORTRESS BURIED UNDER ALL THIS JUNGLE OVERGROWTH... IF WE CAN FIND THE ENTRY... AND ONLY THREE MEN HAVE TRIED! ARMIGNOT IN 1820, REGIS-SMYTH IN 1873, AND COX IN 1911...THEY FAILED! BUT OL' ROYSTON HUGHES IN 1976 WILL DO IT...'CAUSE I HAVE THE OLD CHART! AND WE'LL BE FAMOUS, HONEY! GOT TO RECORD THIS WALL WITH A FEW PIX... AHH! BEAUTIFUL! OKAY, LET'S GO EXPLORE!
THREE HOURS LATER...
ROY, PLEASE! I'M SO TIRED! I MUST REST! LET'S STOP!
NOT YET... NOT YET, HONEY!
WE'RE NEAR THE ENTRY! I CAN ALMOST FEEL IT, HONEY! JUST AN HOUR MORE AND I'LL STOP FOR THE DAY--!

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WHAT IF THERE IS NO ENTRY, ROY?
THERE HAS TO BE ONE, LOUISE!
WHEN THE GODQUEEN KUI DIED AT AGE 93, EVERY ENTRY TO THE TEMPLE FORTRESS WAS SEALED WITH BLOCKS OF STONE... EXCEPT ONE! A SMALL OPENING HIGH UPON THE FACE OF THE MOUNTAIN!
WHY?
TO ALLOW KUI'S SPIRIT AN EASY EXIT AND ACCESS TO HEAVEN! BUT, OF COURSE, IT WAS HIDDEN FROM VIEW BY DENSE OVERGROWTH FOR PROTECTION FROM LATER VIOLATORS OR TRESPASSERS ... LIKE US, REALLY....!
AFTER KUI'S ENTOMBMENT THE TRIBE LEFT THE ISLAND IN THEIR LONG CANOES TO SEEK A NEW HOME... BUT, ACCORDING TO ALL THE OLD WRITINGS AND LEGENDS, MOST OF THEM WERE LOST AT SEA DUE TO STORMS, HUNGER, EXPOSURE... AND SHARKS!
HEY!!
MY ARM WENT RIGHT THROUGH THE VINES!
INTO A-A NICHE OF SOME KIND!
OR-OR, MIRACLE OF ALL MIRACLES, IT-IT'S THE ENTRY! THE BLOODY ENTRY!
WE'VE FOUND IT...!! HAHA!
...THE ENTRY!!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE GAWKING AT ME, LOUISE... HELP ME PULL AWAY THESE DAMNED VINES!
OH, ROY... PLEASE! NO! LET'S NOT GO IN THERE! I'M FRIGHTENED ...PLEASE!
LET'S GO BACK TO THE PLANE... AND TO FIJI!?
DON'T BE A BOOB, HONEY!
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO WALK AWAY FROM HERE... NOT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF WAITING, HOPING, SAVING, FOR THIS 'TRY'... AND THEN ACTUALLY FINDING IT!
NOW COME ON, LOUISE... I'VE GOT MY FLASHLIGHT TO LIGHT OUR WAY! WE'LL BE OKAY!

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WISH I KNEW HOW TO READ THESE WALL GLYPHS... ENOUGH TO GET THE GIST OF 'EM, ANYWAY! BUT NO ONE HAS CRACKED 'EM, YET...DAMN!
R-ROY, PLEASE! LET'S GO BACK NOW OR I'LL GO STARK RAVING MAD IN HERE! WE DON'T BELONG IN THIS TOMB!
OKAY, OKAY, LOUISE! YOU GO BACK BY YOURSELF! GO AHEAD... YOU CAN SEE THE ENTRY BY THE DAYLIGHT OUTSIDE...
...I'LL NEED THE FLASH TO GO ON! I'LL BE OUT IN AN HOUR! SO RELAX!
ROY, I'M AFRAID--! PLEASE COME WITH ME! YOU MIGHT LOSE YOUR WAY IN THERE AND NEVER FIND YOUR WAY OUT AGAIN! I-I WANT BOTH OF US TO LEAVE!
NO! NOW YOU EITHER COME WITH ME...OR YOU GO BACK OUTSIDE ...ALONE!
MAKE UP YOUR MIND, LOUISE!
WHAT'LL IT BE?
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER!
A-ALL RIGHT, ROY... I'LL STAY!
VERY WELL, HON...!
THIS IS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME ADVENTURE...! WE'LL BE OKAY!
NOW LET'S ENJOY IT...!
THERE! SEE--? WE SEEM TO BE COMING OUT OF THIS NARROW PASSAGE INTO A LARGE ROOM! HURRY, HON--!
WHA-?!? HEY--!!! LOOSE STONE TIPPING DOWN...! CAREFUL HERE, LOUISE!!

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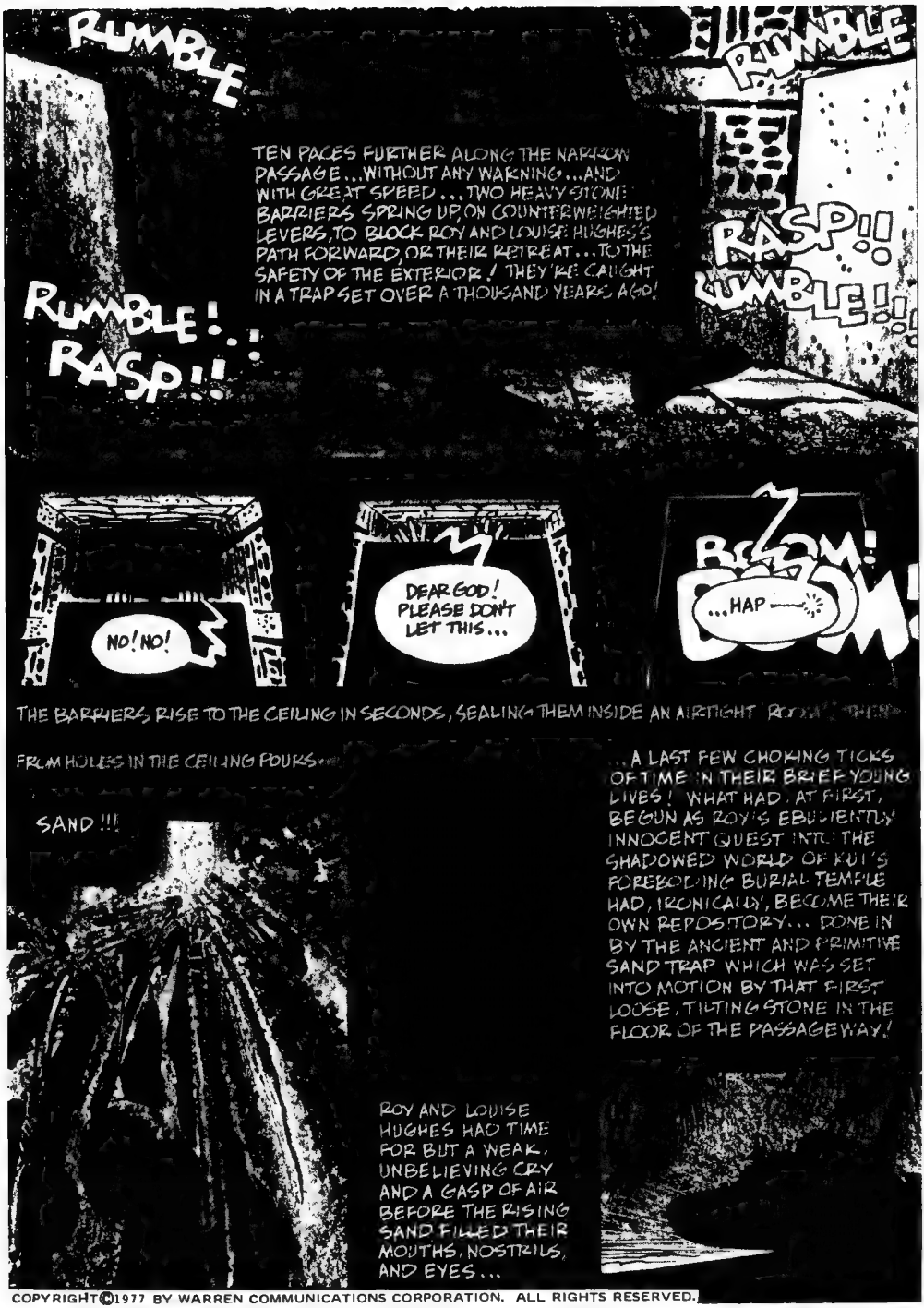
RUMBLE
TEN PACES FURTHER ALONG THE NARROW PASSAGE...WITHOUT ANY WARNING...AND WITH GREAT SPEED...TWO HEAVY STONE BARRIERS SPRING UP, ON COUNTERWEIGHTED LEVERS, TO BLOCK ROY AND LOUISE HUGHES'S PATH FORWARD, OR THEIR RETREAT...TO THE SAFETY OF THE EXTERIOR! THEY'RE CAUGHT IN A TRAP SET OVER A THOUSAND YEARS AGO!
RUMBLE!..
RASP!!
RUMBLE
RASP!!
RUMBLE!!
NO! NO!
DEAR GOD! PLEASE DON'T LET THIS...
BOOM!
...HAP
THE BARRIERS RISE TO THE CEILING IN SECONDS, SEALING THEM INSIDE AN AIRTIGHT ROOM! THEN...
FROM HOLES IN THE CEILING POURS...
SAND!!!
...A LAST FEW CHOKING TICKS OF TIME IN THEIR BRIEF YOUNG LIVES! WHAT HAD, AT FIRST, BEGUN AS ROY'S EBULIENTLY INNOCENT QUEST INTO THE SHADOWED WORLD OF KUT'S FOREBODING BURIAL TEMPLE HAD, IRONICALLY, BECOME THEIR OWN REPOSITORY... DONE IN BY THE ANCIENT AND PRIMITIVE SAND TRAP WHICH WAS SET INTO MOTION BY THAT FIRST LOOSE, TILTING STONE IN THE FLOOR OF THE PASSAGEWAY!
ROY AND LOUISE HUGHES HAD TIME FOR BUT A WEAK, UNBELIEVING CRY AND A GASP OF AIR BEFORE THE RISING SAND FILLED THEIR MOUTHS, NOSTRILS, AND EYES...
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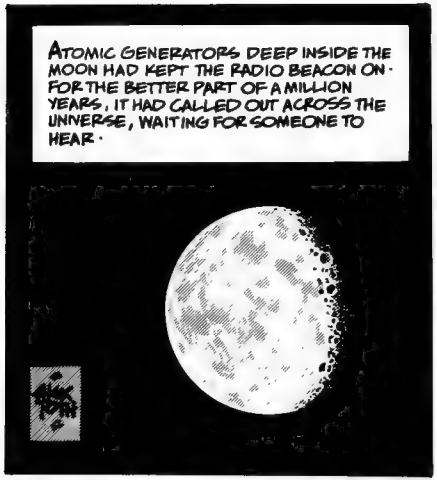
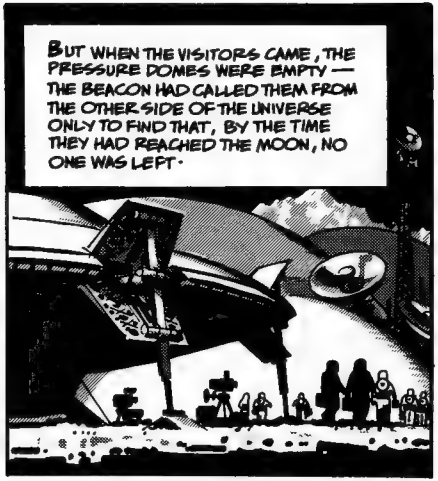
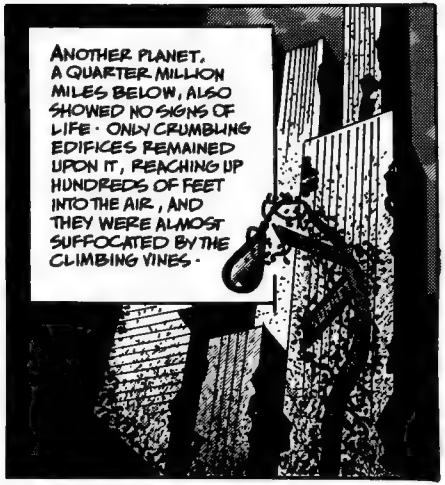

ATOMIC GENERATORS DEEP INSIDE THE MOON HAD KEPT THE RADIO BEACON ON · FOR THE BETTER PART OF A MILLION YEARS, IT HAD CALLED OUT ACROSS THE UNIVERSE, WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO HEAR ·


BUT WHEN THE VISITORS CAME, THE PRESSURE DOMES WERE EMPTY — THE BEACON HAD CALLED THEM FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE ONLY TO FIND THAT, BY THE TIME THEY HAD REACHED THE MOON, NO ONE WAS LEFT ·


ANOTHER PLANET, A QUARTER-MILLION MILES BELOW, ALSO SHOWED NO SIGNS OF LIFE · ONLY CRUMBLING EDIFICES REMAINED UPON IT, REACHING UP HUNDREDS OF FEET INTO THE AIR, AND THEY WERE ALMOST SUFFOCATED BY THE CLIMBING VINES ·

AS THE VISITORS PREPARED TO LEAVE, A STRANGE THING HAPPENED: THE BEACON STOPPED TRANSMITTING ITS INCESSANT DOTS AND DASHES, AND INSTEAD, BEGAN TO BROADCAST A VOICE RECORDED A MILLION YEARS AGO:

"IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH ..." IT SAID, AND IT RECITED A STRANGE AND BEAUTIFUL STORY, GOING ON FOR THE BETTER PART OF A MONTH, DAY AND NIGHT · THE VISITORS LISTENED, AND ...

·THEY, TOO, RECORDED THE MESSAGE, TO THE END OF REVELATION · DEPARTING, THEY MUSED: " STRANGE, IS IT NOT—
" —THAT A RACE WHICH POSSESSED ALL THAT KNOWLEDGE MIGHT HAVE PERISHED ? "
END

ALEX TOTH

ART FOR SALE

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